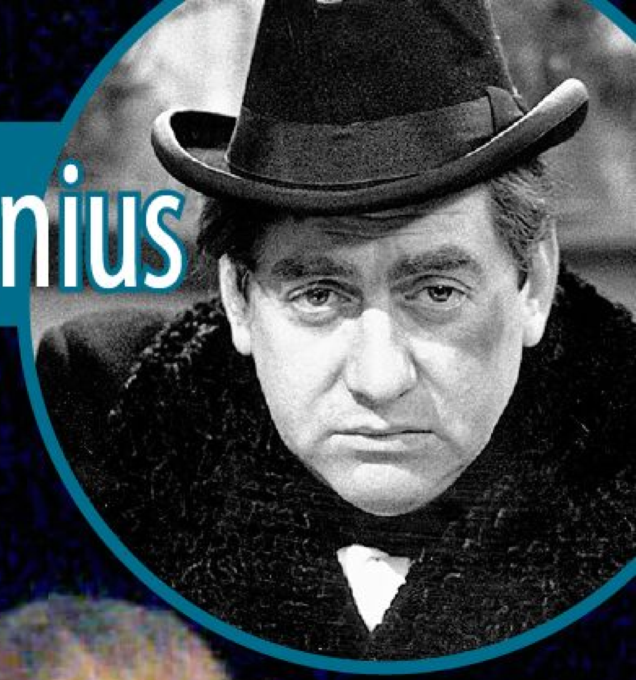
★ TRY ME! ★

TONY HANCOCK: Tragic end to a comic genius



Yours RETRO

ISSUE 75 // June 2024

Celebrating the STARS we love









BEFORE THEY WERE FAMOUS... Who did they grow up to be?

SECRETS FROM THE FILM SET

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids *turns 35*



MARILYN

Her search for lasting love and motherhood

£4.40



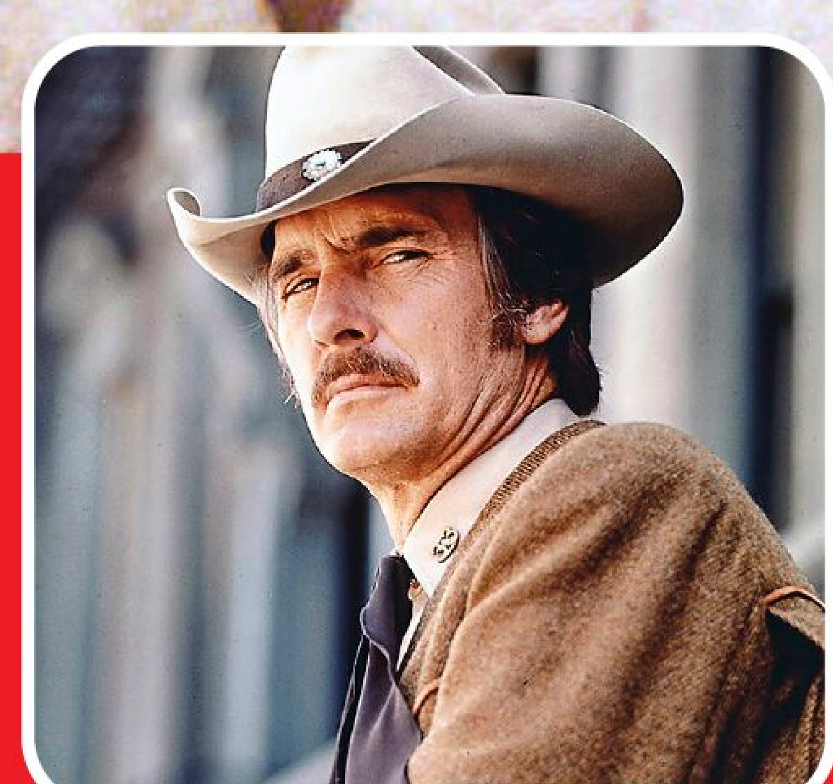
O'TOOLE & BURTON Why Liz Taylor tried to ban their friendship



■ **MITZI GAYNOR** A showbiz legend still dazzling at 92



■ **CROSSROADS** How the TV soap left a charity legacy



■ **McCLOUD** Dennis Weaver's New York cowboy

THE WILD BUNCH: The making of the last Western

Yours Issue 75

RETRO contents



On the cover









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This issue







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Hello again...

I came away from reading our cover star feature this month (page 6) with a real sense of poignancy. Our Marilyn expert, Michelle Morgan, has delved into the star's marriage to Arthur Miller, a relationship that many of us find somewhat baffling as, on the surface, they seem so terribly mismatched. However, it appears the couple were genuinely happy and, for a time at least, Marilyn was finally able to enjoy the life of quiet domesticity that had eluded her for so long. What she longed for more than anything was to have a child of her own, but sadly two failed pregnancies took their toll on Marilyn's already fragile mental health. You can't help wondering what might have been, had those babies survived. Could Marilyn's life have turned out so very differently? Read on to make up your own mind...

Sharon **Sharon** EDITOR

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Seven scenes ...with snakes

Ophiophobes should look away now because we've collected together cinema's seven best scenes with serpents



Carry On Cleo (1964)

Mark Antony (Sid James) is trying to come up with a way to kill Caesar (Kenneth Williams). "I have a poisonous ass!" exclaims Cleo (Amanda Barrie) "One bite of this should be enough." "You're right," Antony replies as he chomps its head off, "One bite's enough for anyone. That's shocking!"

RETRO says: UFO actress Wanda Ventham (mother of Benedict Cumberbatch) cameos as a woman bidding on slaves at the auction.



Live and Let Die (1973)

There's one sent to bite Bond (Roger Moore) in the bath and Baron Samedi (Geoffrey Holder) uses plenty of snakes in his Voodoo rituals. However, in reality Holder had a morbid fear of snakes and was terrified to film the scene where he falls into a coffin of the slithering beasts.

RETRO says: Stuntman Ross Kananga says he received $60,000 (and 193 stitches!) for the scene where Bond flees by running across the backs of crocodiles.

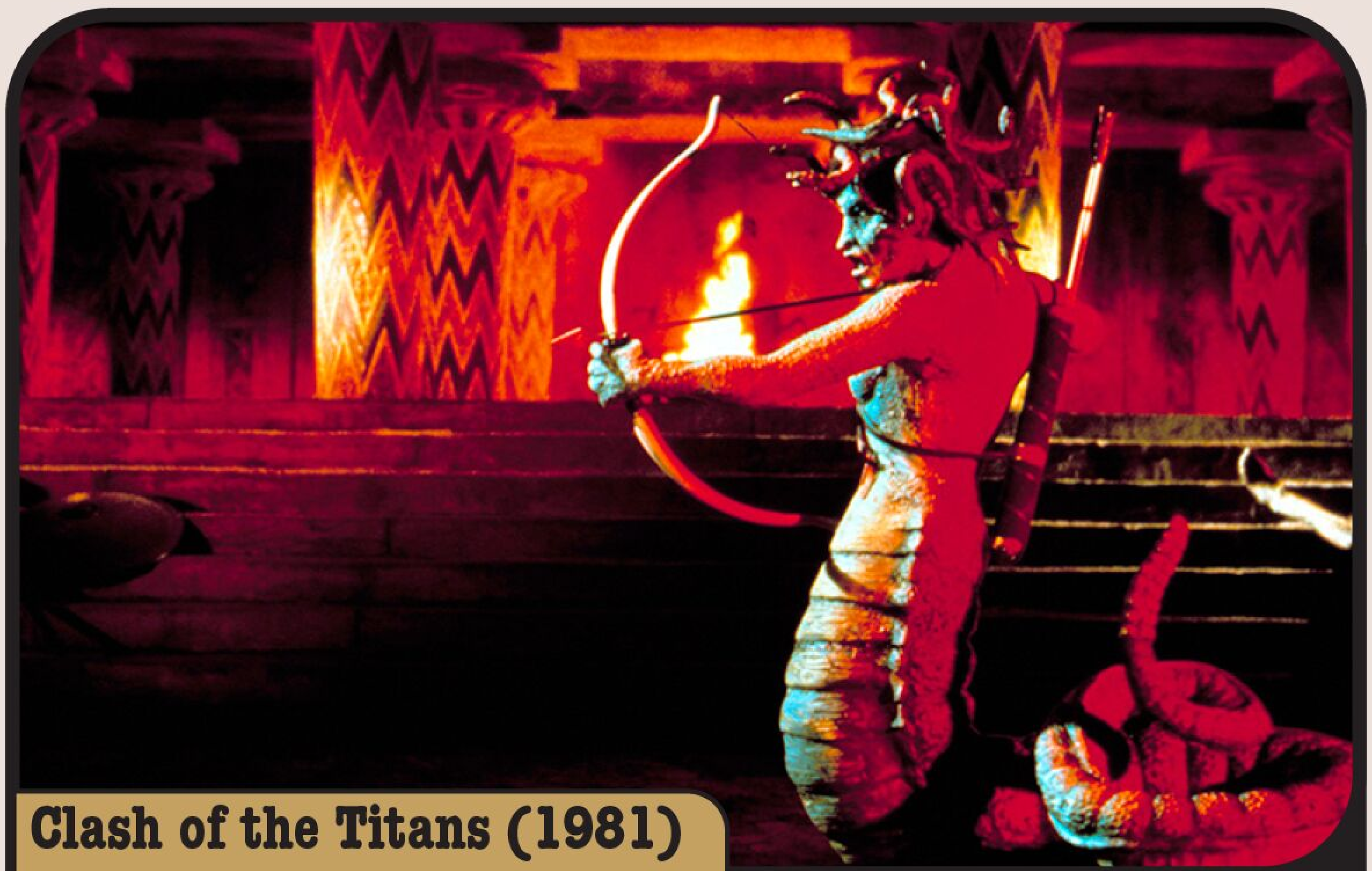


Cool Hand Luke (1967)

The rattlesnake that Luke (Paul Newman) grabs while working on the chain gang is destined to meet with a sticky end. When he holds it aloft by the tail, Boss Godfrey (Morgan Woodward) shoots its head off.

RETRO says: Woodward remained in character as 'The Man with No Eyes', wearing his mirrored sunglasses and not speaking to the rest of the cast between takes.

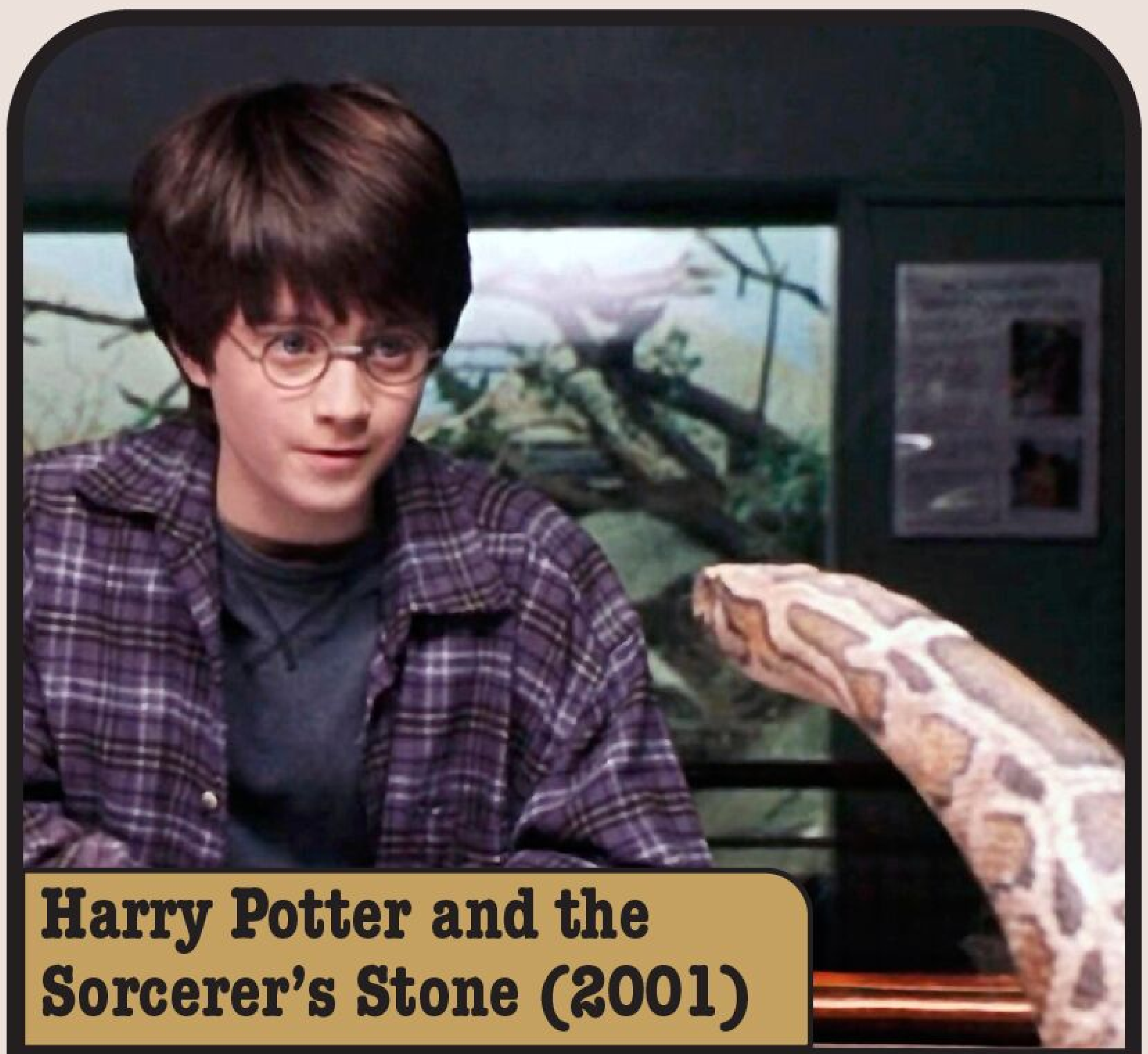
Clash of the Titans (1981)



The Medusa sequence took all the skill of Dynamation legend Ray Harryhausen. Along with her serpent body and rattlesnake tail her 'hair,' was made up of 12 writhing snakes. Tiny levers inside the Medusa's lips allowed for multiple expressions.

RETRO says: Despite having main billing on the posters Ursula Andress has only one line in the film.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (2001)



Young wizard Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) is plagued by snakes throughout the film franchise, beginning with a trip to London Zoo where he accidentally releases a python from its enclosure.

RETRO says: Harry also defeats a Basilisk in Chamber of Secrets (2002).

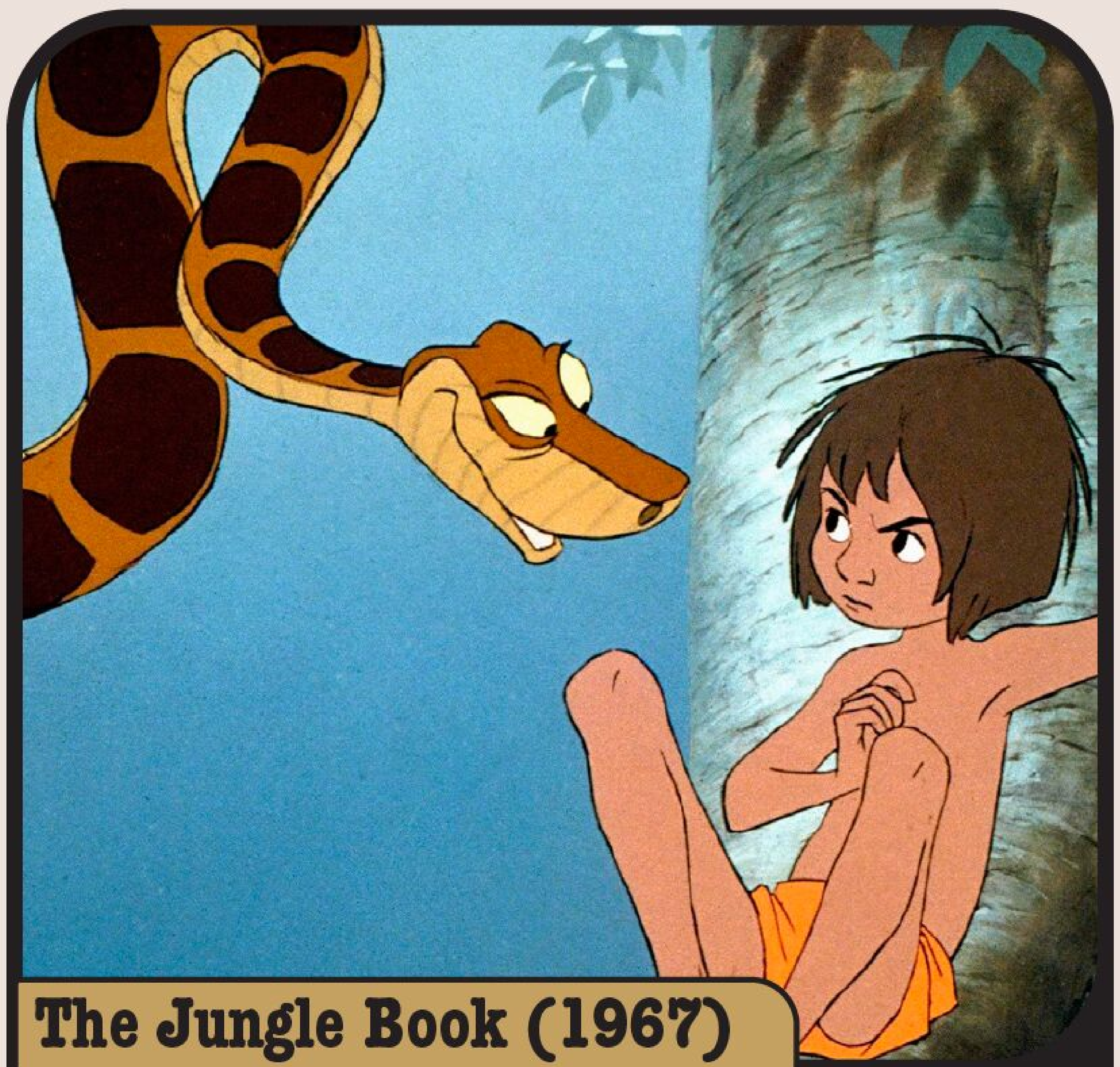
Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)



"Snakes, why did it have to be snakes?" Indy (Harrison Ford) grumbles as he looks down at a writhing sea of serpents in The Well of Souls, where he and Marion (Karen Allen) are both trapped.

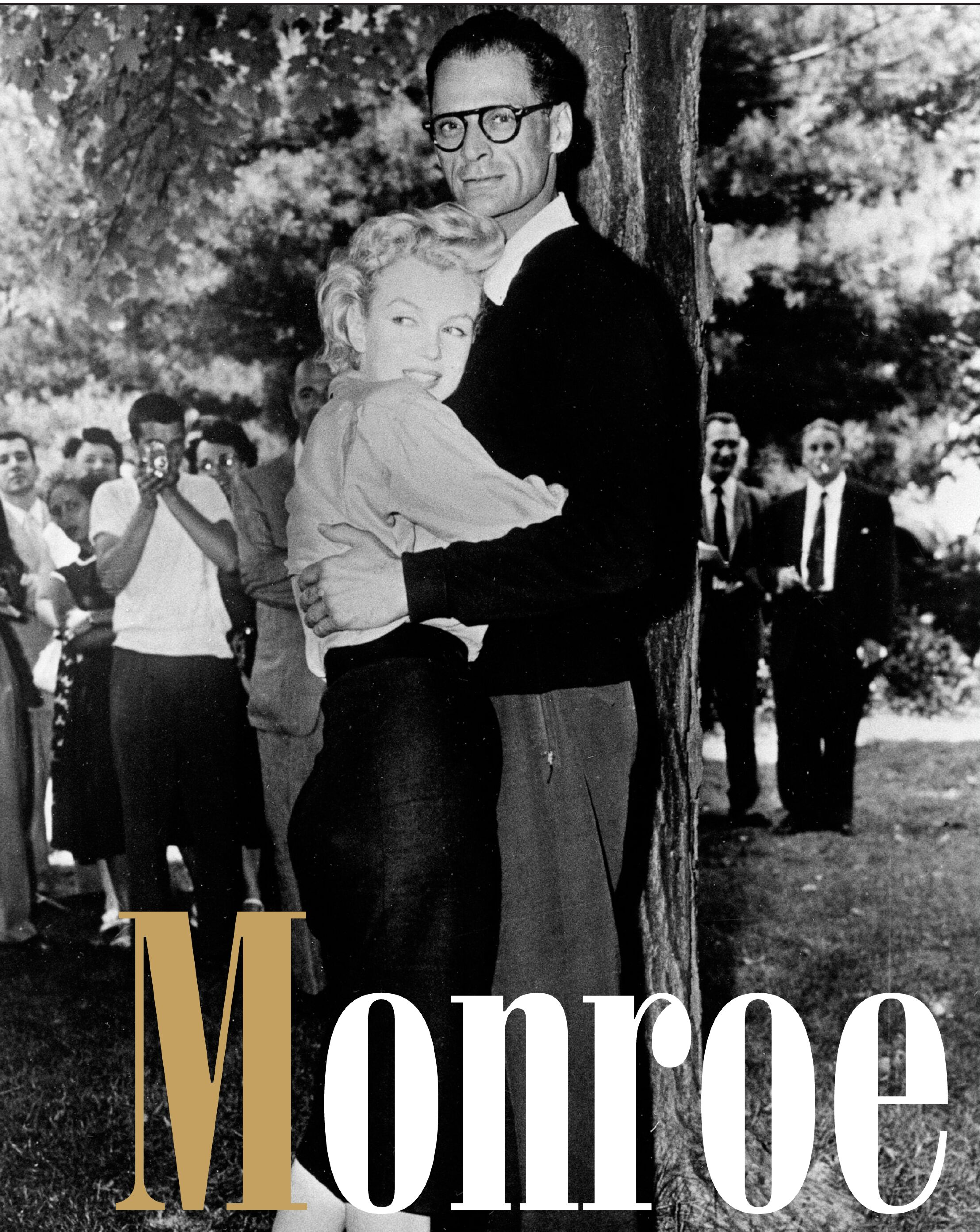
RETRO says: Karen Allen's stunt double refused to film the scene – the shapely legs you see actually belong to snake handler Steven Edge.

The Jungle Book (1967)



Character actor Sterling Holloway voiced the scheming snake Kaa as well as many other Disney characters such as Winnie the Pooh (1966) and the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland (1951).

RETRO says: Bruce Reitherman, who provided the voice of Mowgli, later became a cinematographer for wildlife documentaries.



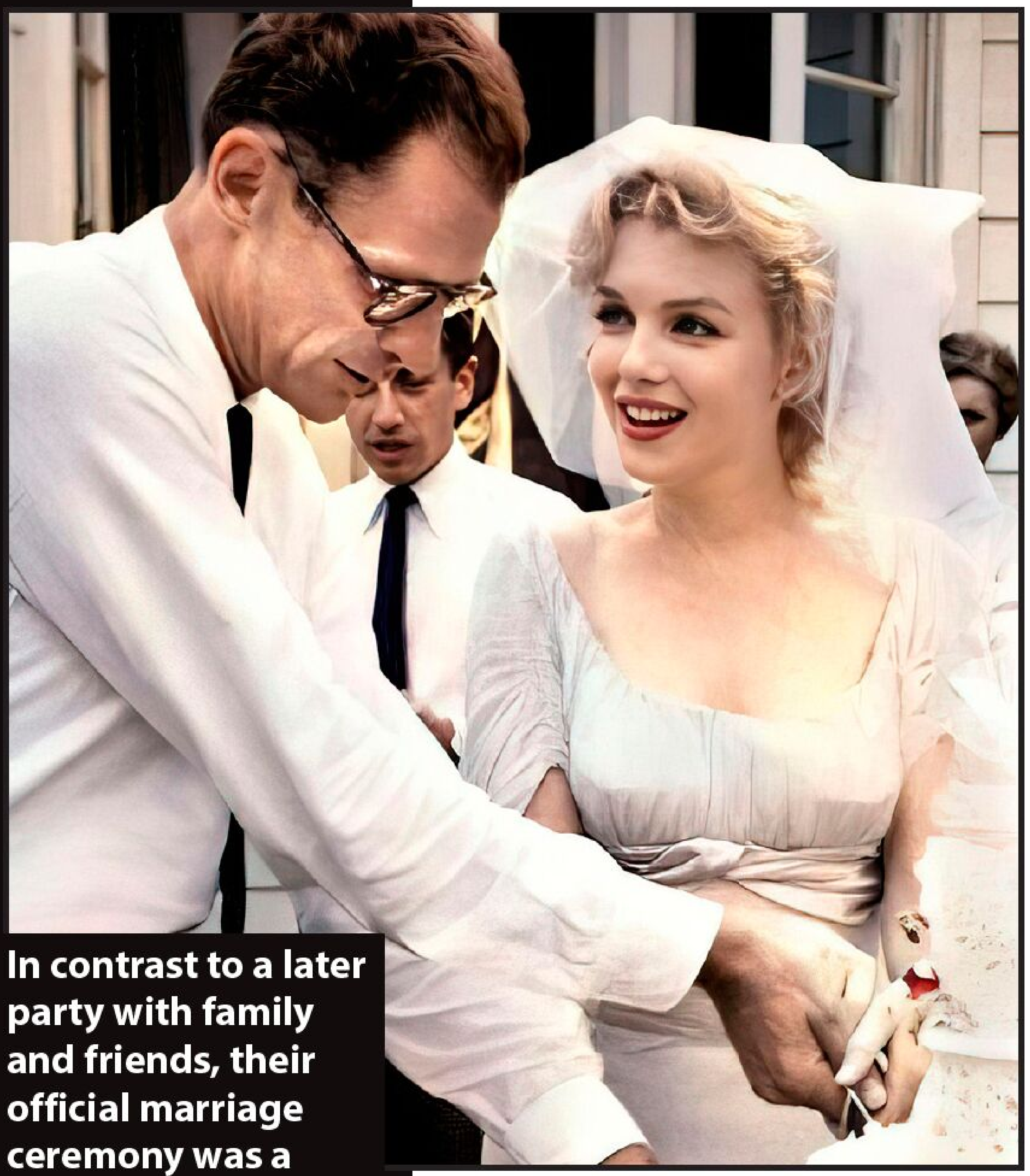
Monroe

Marilyn expert Michelle Morgan explores the star's marriage to playwright Arthur Miller to discover whether the odd couple were in fact a love match after all

"Arthur sometimes reminds me, that when we first met, I was crying." So said Marilyn Monroe about her third husband, playwright Arthur Miller. The couple met in 1951, when Marilyn was a young starlet, mourning the loss of her agent and lover, Johnny Hyde. She found a sympathetic ear in Miller, who believed her to be one of the saddest women he had ever met. The writer listened to her problems, and escorted her around town, but when he felt himself falling in love, he panicked. Miller was married with a family, and this was not a situation he wanted to find himself in. He flew back to his home in New York, and Marilyn got on with her life.

By 1955, Marilyn had become a huge star, divorced second husband Joe DiMaggio, turned her back on Hollywood and was living in New York. There she studied at the Actors Studio, took private classes with teacher Lee Strasberg, and set up her own film company with photographer Milton H. Greene.





In contrast to a later party with family and friends, their official marriage ceremony was a small affair, with only two witnesses

To be married

Arthur Miller's marriage, meanwhile, was coming apart, and he and Marilyn reconnected. The actress never hid the fact that she was a fan of his work (once even posing with one of his books in a publicity shot), but because the playwright wasn't officially separated from his wife, the romance was kept secret. In that regard, the two met quietly in Marilyn's apartment, and rode bicycles incognito around Brooklyn.

While Marilyn returned to Hollywood to make Bus Stop in spring 1956, Miller flew to Nevada for a divorce. By this time, reporters were suspicious that there may be ➤

DID YOU KNOW?

Marilyn would often type letters to her step-children, in the voice of Hugo, their basset hound, filling them in on new animal sightings, or things Hugo had mistakenly eaten.

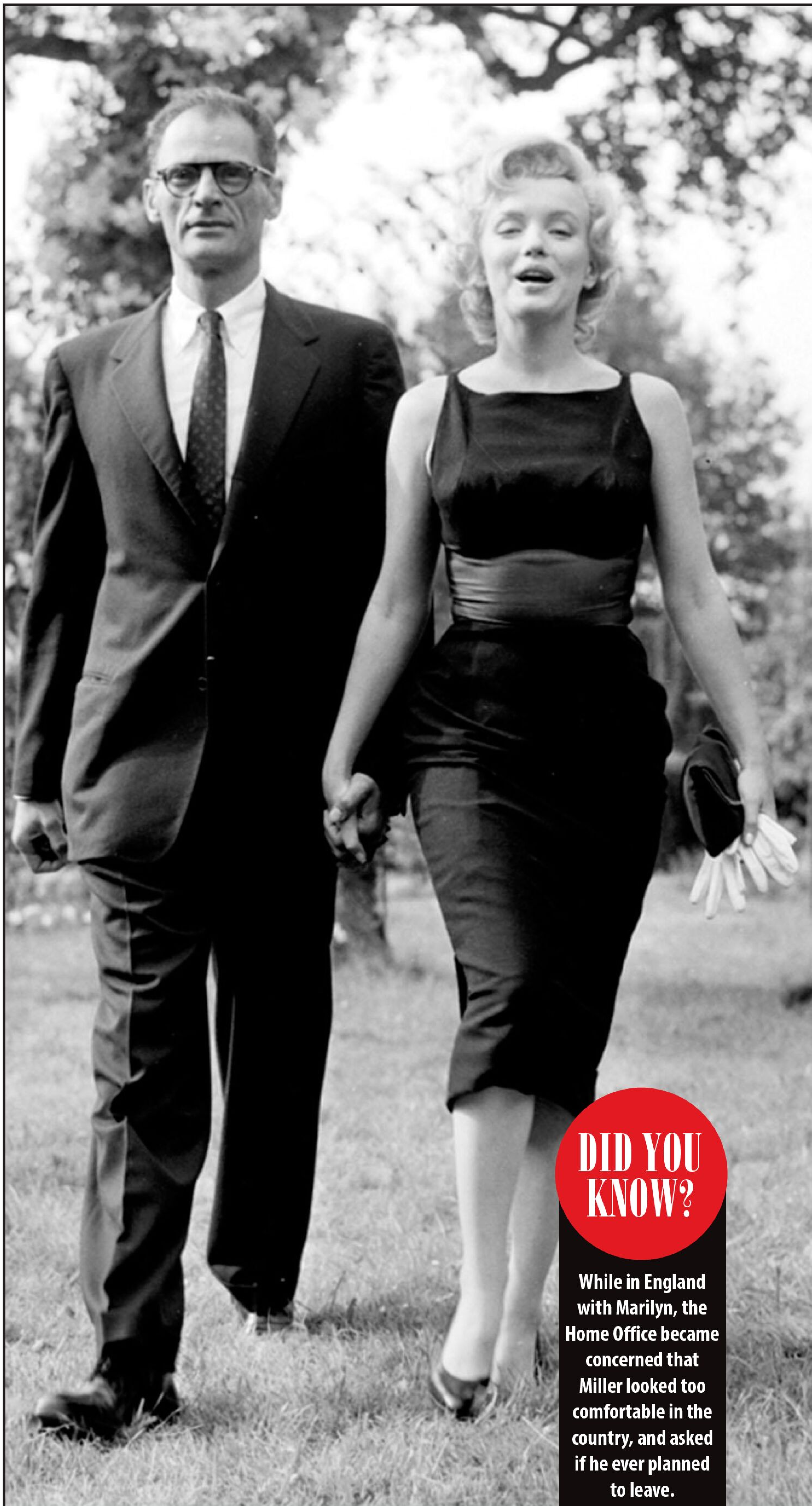
& Miller

something going on between the two celebrities, but Marilyn still played it down, describing Miller as just a friend. The relationship was eventually revealed when Miller was hauled before the House Un-American Activities Committee, for refusing to name communists. After the appearance, reporters were keen to know why he had recently applied for a passport. "I have a production which is in the talking stage in England," he said, "and I will be there with the woman who will then be my wife." Reporters asked if that woman was Marilyn, and Miller replied in the affirmative. In her apartment, the actress was surprised to hear the disclosure, especially since the couple had only recently discussed marriage. When journalists besieged her in the hallway, one demanded to know when she and Miller would have children. "Why, I'm not married yet, dear," she laughed.

Written revelations

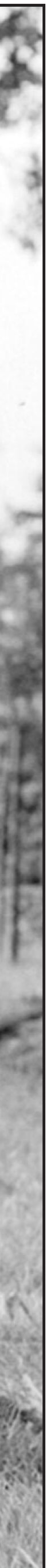
Marilyn and Arthur Miller married in Connecticut on June 29 1956, and that was followed by a Jewish ceremony on July 1. The couple held a party for friends and family, and were photographed looking happy and content in each other's company. Then, on July 14, they arrived in London, so Marilyn could make The Prince and the Showgirl (1957) with Laurence Olivier. The shoot was fraught with difficulties, not least of which was the hatred between the two stars, and Marilyn's frequent absences and lateness on the set. Miller had never seen Marilyn shoot an entire film before, and the drama came as a shock to him. When he attempted to give his opinion on what was happening on set, he found himself on the end of Marilyn's temper, because she assumed he was taking Olivier's side. Unable to speak to his wife about his observations, Miller took to his journal to write down his feelings.

Unless Miller's notebooks are released to the public, we will never



DID YOU KNOW?

While in England with Marilyn, the Home Office became concerned that Miller looked too comfortable in the country, and asked if he ever planned to leave.



know exactly what he wrote about Marilyn, but the gist seems to be that he was disappointed in her, and even compared her to his first wife, Mary. Miller made the catastrophic mistake of leaving the journal on his desk, and when Marilyn found it she broke down. The actress was unable to work for a time after the incident, which made relations between herself and Olivier even more fraught.

Desperate for family

Back in New York after finally finishing the movie, the ripples from the England trip continued to grow. Marilyn's drama teachers, Lee and Paula Strasberg, had already decided they were not particularly enthralled by Arthur Miller, and the notebook incident put an end to any attempts of becoming closer. Marilyn's business partner Milton Greene was not overly fond either, and it wasn't long before he was ousted from their company, and out of Marilyn's life.

At the beginning of 1957, Marilyn and Arthur took a delayed honeymoon to Jamaica, and then spent the rest of the year together in New York, Connecticut and Amagansett. In the latter, Marilyn and Arthur walked on the beach, went fishing, and spent time talking with locals and fans who stopped by their rented home. Marilyn enjoyed being a wife to Miller, and revelled in the idea of becoming a mother. Her step-children brought her tremendous joy, and she loved playing games with them, and reading in the evenings. "I have never been so happy in my life," Marilyn said. "This is the first time I think I have really been in love… My first interest is in being a wife."

Despite the reservations during the making of The Prince and the Showgirl, Arthur Miller seemed totally dedicated to Marilyn during this time. Friend and photographer Sam Shaw snapped photos of them playing on the beach, strolling hand-in-hand in New York, and eating hotdogs. "[Arthur is] the boss of this household," Marilyn told a reporter. "I don't think the marriage versus career thing ever would come up with us. But if it ever did, our life together comes first… I'm mad about the man."

It was during this year of quiet domesticity that Marilyn became pregnant. Sadly, it was an ectopic pregnancy, which resulted in miscarriage. Photographers and reporters crowded around the entrance to the New York hospital where she was staying and, as Marilyn walked out, they snapped dozens of photographs, and asked intrusive questions. "I'm feeling wonderful," she lied, before adding, "I definitely still plan to have a large family. I'm going to rest, rest and more rest."

Marilyn threw herself into making the couple's Roxbury farmhouse into a real home, and spent many hours searching for just the right furniture and accessories. For now, the marriage was still strong, and Arthur Miller helped his wife through the trauma of the ectopic pregnancy, and encouraged her in her continuing dreams of becoming a serious actress. Miller was also sure they would one day add to their family; something Marilyn believed in, too. "We do so much long for a child," she said. "But that will come, I'm sure."

Marilyn hadn't worked since The Prince and the Showgirl, but in 1958, while Miller was reaching the end of his political troubles, she flew to California to make Some Like it Hot (1959) with Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis. The filming was stressful, and Marilyn often fluffed her lines and kept her two co-stars waiting for hours on set. Miller was there for some of the time, and did his best to support his wife, going so far as to write to director Billy Wilder, when he felt that Marilyn's welfare was being overlooked.

During the making of the movie, Marilyn became pregnant again, but miscarried shortly after returning to New York. This second miscarriage was further along than the previous one, and Marilyn took the loss hard. She spent the next year quietly trying to find ways to carry a baby full-term, but sadly, she did not become pregnant again. Thankfully, her step-children continued to bring her great joy. "It's such fun for all of us to plan different things to do together," she said. "I really look forward to each visit."

By 1960, the Miller marriage was coming apart. Problems with Marilyn's mental health and medication, Miller's court case, and the couple's inability to have children, had all taken their toll. Added to that, Marilyn was hurt by a screenplay Miller had written for her. The Misfits was supposed to be a love letter to his wife, but the character of Roslyn was too close to real life, and Marilyn resented it.

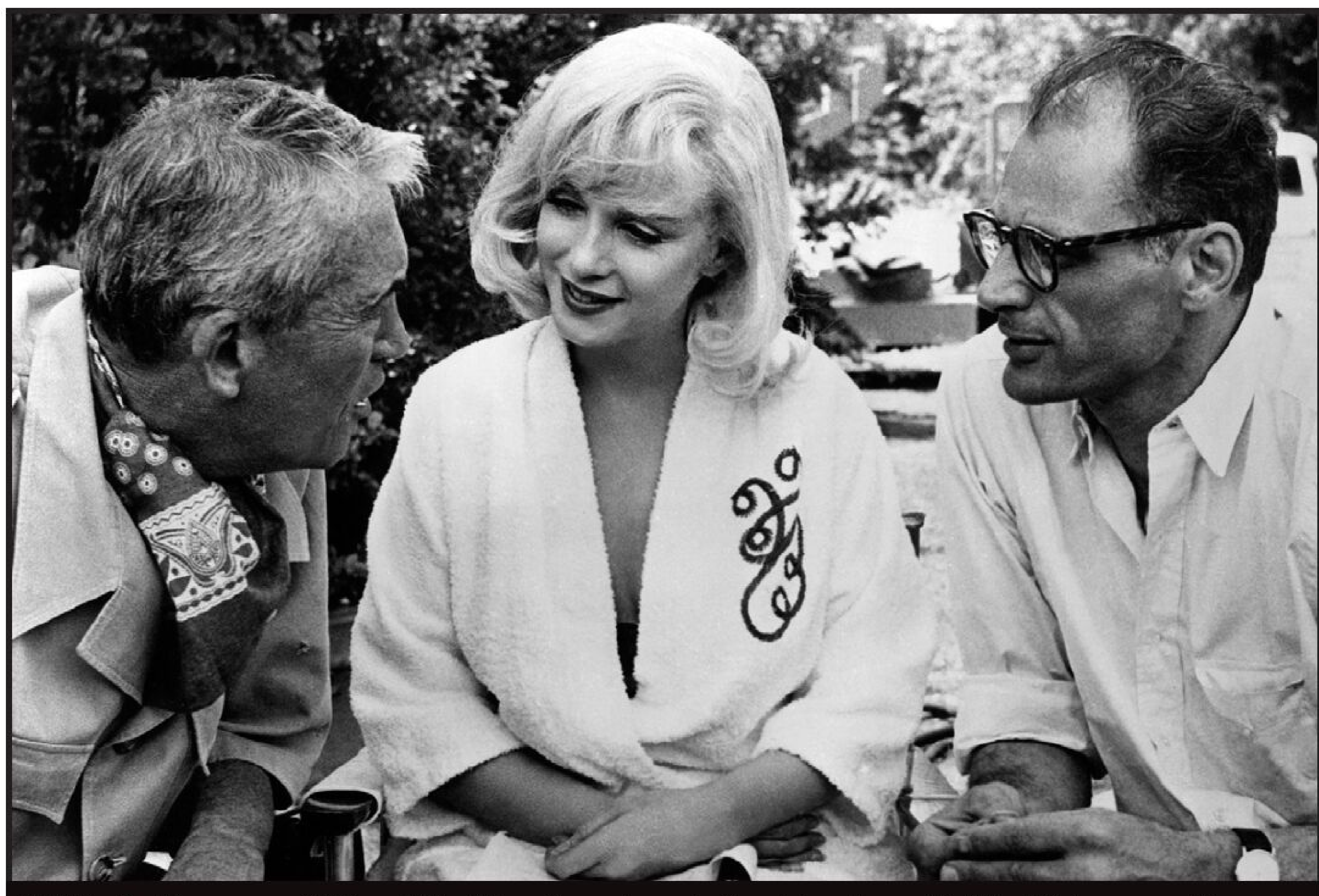
The making of her next movie, Let's Make Love (1960), was once again fraught with difficulties. Arthur Miller despised the script, and took it upon himself to do ➤

The beginning of the end?

Some have said that the notebook incident that happened during their trip to England was the beginning of the end for the Miller marriage, but this was not so. By the time The Prince and the Showgirl had wrapped, the couple were back on track. Staff at their rented home would often walk in on the couple kissing, while actors at Pinewood frequently witnessed Marilyn rushing off the set and straight into the arms of her husband.



frequent rewrites. The idea was to make the film better for his wife, but all it really did was cause more friction between them. When he left the set to further his work on The Misfits, Marilyn had an affair with co-star Yves Montand. It had ended by the time the film was over, but caused untold damage to the Miller marriage. The couple went straight into the making of The Misfits (1961), but it was clear almost from the beginning the marriage would not last. They separated during filming, and then Marilyn flew to Mexico to obtain a quick divorce.



With Arthur and The Misfits director John Huston (*left*). This was the last film Marilyn would complete before her untimely death

After the fall

"He is a wonderful man and a great writer," the actress said. "But it didn't work out that we should be husband and wife." Still, Marilyn felt a great deal of sadness for the way the relationship had ended, and kept in touch with her ex-father-in-law, and step-children. "I take a lot of pride in them, because they're from broken homes," she said. "I think I love them more than I love anyone; their lives that are forming are very precious to me and I know that I had a part in forming them."

By the time Marilyn passed away in 1962, Arthur Miller was remarried and expecting a baby with photographer Inge Morath, whom he'd met on the set of The Misfits. He did not go to Marilyn's funeral. "She is not really there any more," he said. "It would not be appropriate to mourn her in that way." Just as he had in England, Miller explored his feelings through his writing, this time in a play, entitled After The Fall. The piece was not a literal observation of their marriage, but close enough for critics and furious fans to raise their eyebrows. His career continued, but the aftermath of the play did tremendous damage.

"If she was simple, it would have been easy to help her," Miller said about his second wife. "One must have humility and respect for the mysteries of life. She could have made it with a little luck. She needed a blessing."

DID YOU KNOW?

Marilyn adored Arthur's father Isidore Miller, and called him Dad. He was her companion on the night she sang Happy Birthday to President Kennedy.

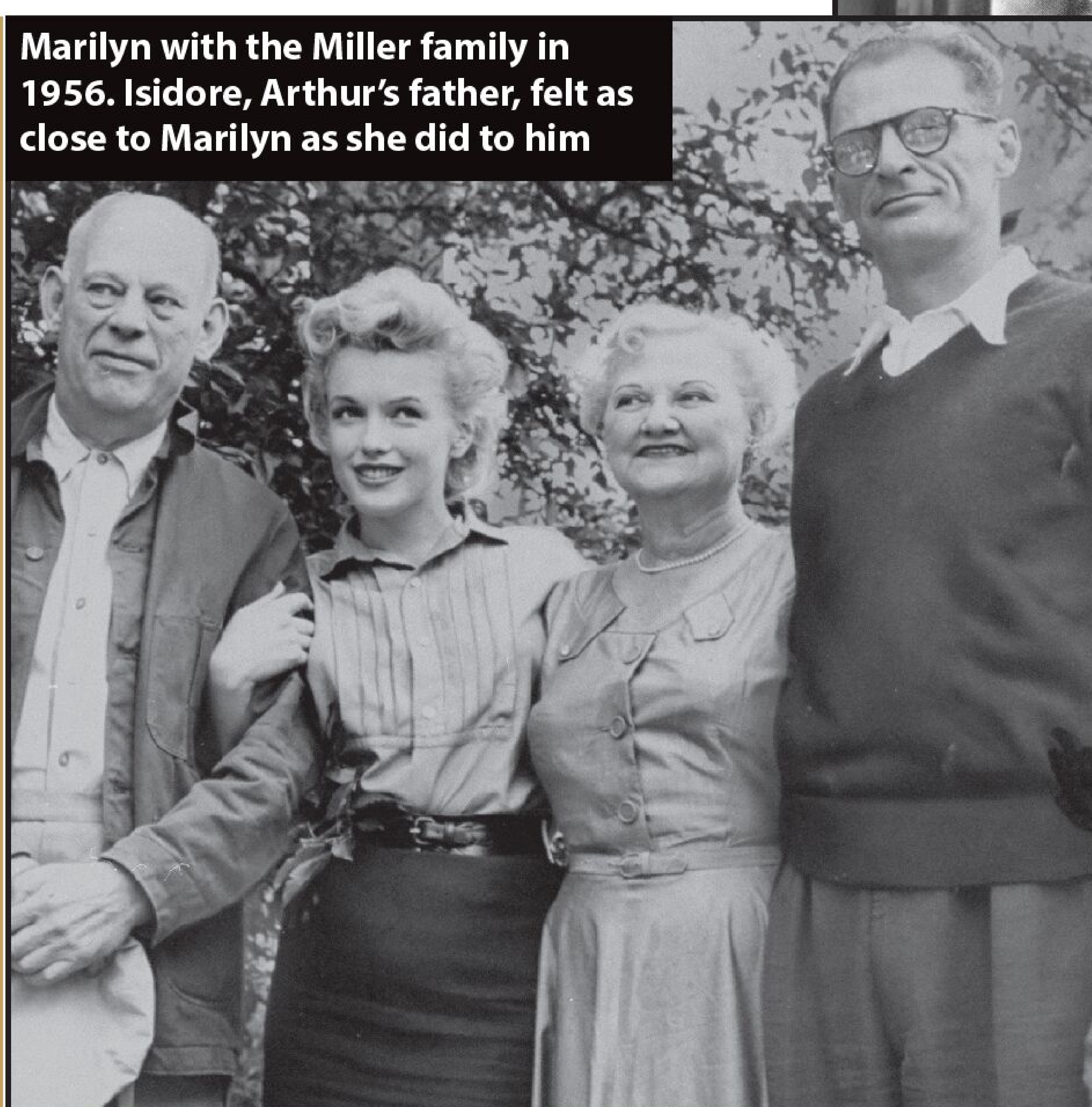


Art imitates life

Because of work such as After the Fall, and the infamous notebook incident, many dismiss Arthur Miller as Marilyn's worst husband, stating that he did not care for her at all. While his decisions may have been ill-chosen, this conclusion is unfair. It was certainly seen as a controversial idea to write a play inspired by his marriage, but he was not the first writer to use his life as a springboard in his work.

Furthermore, while Joe DiMaggio was keen for Marilyn to give up acting and become a full-time wife, Arthur Miller encouraged her to become the serious actress she always wanted to be. The marriage may have ultimately imploded, but there is no doubt that Marilyn and Arthur Miller loved each other for a long time, and the relationship certainly seemed to play on Miller's mind for the rest of his life.

Marilyn with the Miller family in 1956. Isidore, Arthur's father, felt as close to Marilyn as she did to him





I know the face...

NORMAN MITCHELL



Born: August 27, 1918, Sheffield, Yorkshire
Died: March 19, 2001, Downham Market, Norfolk
Screen debut: Henry II in TV movie The Trial of Andy Fothergill (1951)
Screen credits: Over 2,000
Best known for: When he was just 18, Norman Mitchell turned his back on studying medicine at Sheffield University to walk 168 miles to Elstree Studios in London. It was the beginning of a 50-year career, interrupted by six years' service in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the Second World War.

Norman's versatility and strong work ethic would see him cast in nearly 200 films, 500 radio broadcasts, and an estimated 2,000 appearances on TV, including A Night to Remember (1958), Carry On Cabby (1963), Spying (1964), Cleo (1964) and The Pink Panther Strikes Again (1976). His pugnacious looks made him perfect for playing doormen, policemen and security guards such as in Oliver! (1968), Bless This House (1972) and Only When I Laugh (1982).

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■ In the last issue (74) you asked for examples of continuity slip-ups. One of my favourites is in The Main Event (1979) Ryan O'Neal slips up and calls Barbra Streisand's character Judy instead of Hillary. Judy was the name of her character in their previous film together What's Up Doc? (1972).
Michael Crossland





Auction watch

A Star Trek fan recently paid the huge sum of $42,500 for the pleasure of owning Captain Kirk's wraparound tunic worn on screen by William Shatner in season two of the original show. The piece, as with all the other costumes in the show, was designed by William Ware Theiss.



CATCH IT NOW

Judy Garland expert and regular **Retro** contributor, Gary Horrocks, is hosting a talk, Q&A and book signing by film historian David Fantle about the making of the 1950 MGM musical, Summer Stock, starring Judy Garland and Gene Kelly.

Fantle has thoroughly researched the production for his latest book, C'mon, Get Happy: The Making of Summer Stock, and will be tracing the history of the film, Garland's last at the studio, as well as providing insights into the mechanics of MGM's famous musical film factory system.

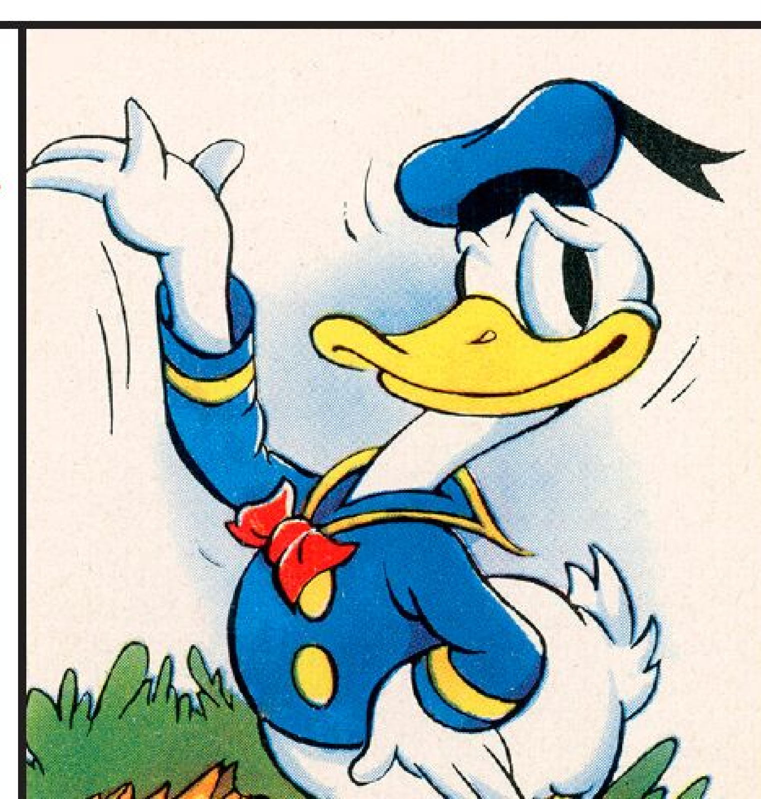
■ Wednesday August 14, 2024 at 7.30pm at the British Film Institute Reuben Library, Southbank London. Tickets are just £6.50 but advance booking is essential via bfi.org.uk/bfi-reuben-library

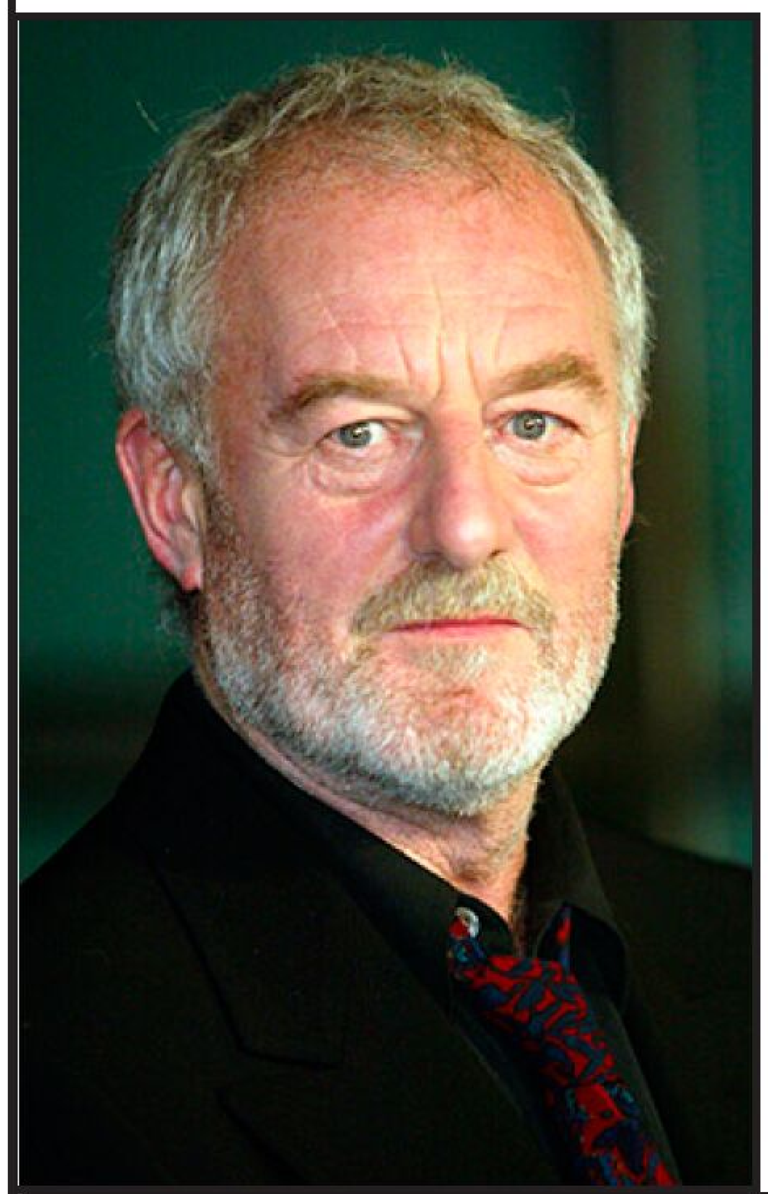
■ I was very interested to read the article on Betty Driver (**Retro** 73) particularly her association with Max Wall and Henry Hall. I recently inherited an autograph book belonging to my late aunt who served in the WAAF during the war. On the page dated 1st June 1945 are the signatures of Betty Driver, Max Wall, Henry Hall and, Bryan Michie from an ENSA show at Biggin Hill. It's fantastic to think that my aunt had the chance to see these great performers live.
Roger May



90 years ago... June 9, 1934

Donald Duck made his screen debut in the Walt Disney cartoon, The Wise Little Hen. The release date was celebrated forever after as Donald's birthday.

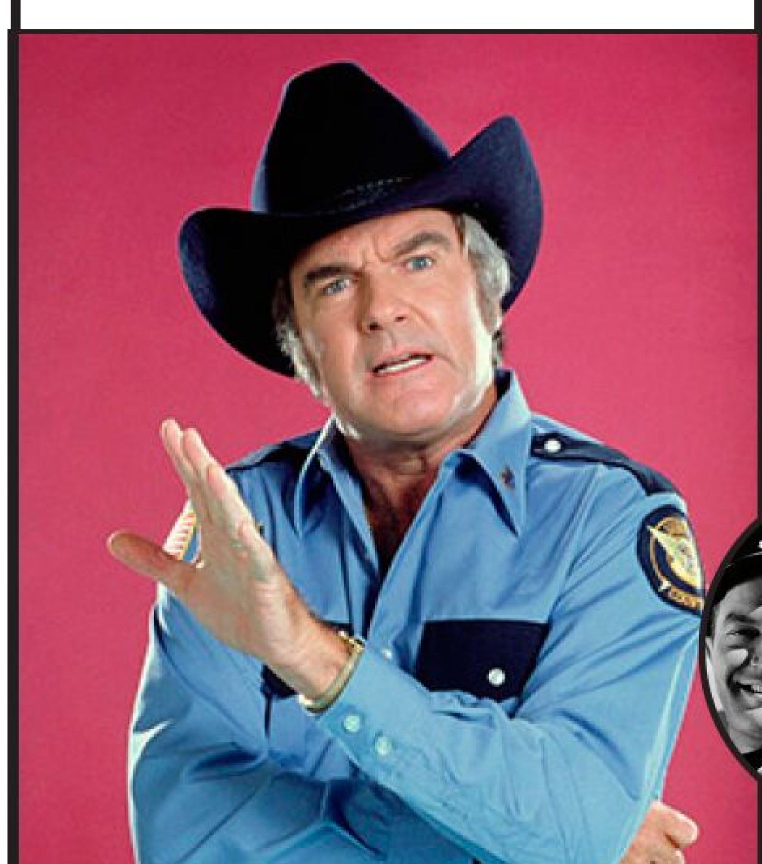




■ I was saddened to hear of the death of Bernard Hill at the age of 79. Although a Mancunian by birth he felt to me like an honorary Scouser after playing Yosser Hughes in Boys From the Blackstuff and Pauline Collins' awful husband in Shirley Valentine (1989). He was wonderfully dignified as the ill-fated captain of the Titanic (1997) but for his final role he was back to Liverpool as Martin Freeman's dad in TV drama The Responder.
Graham Walker

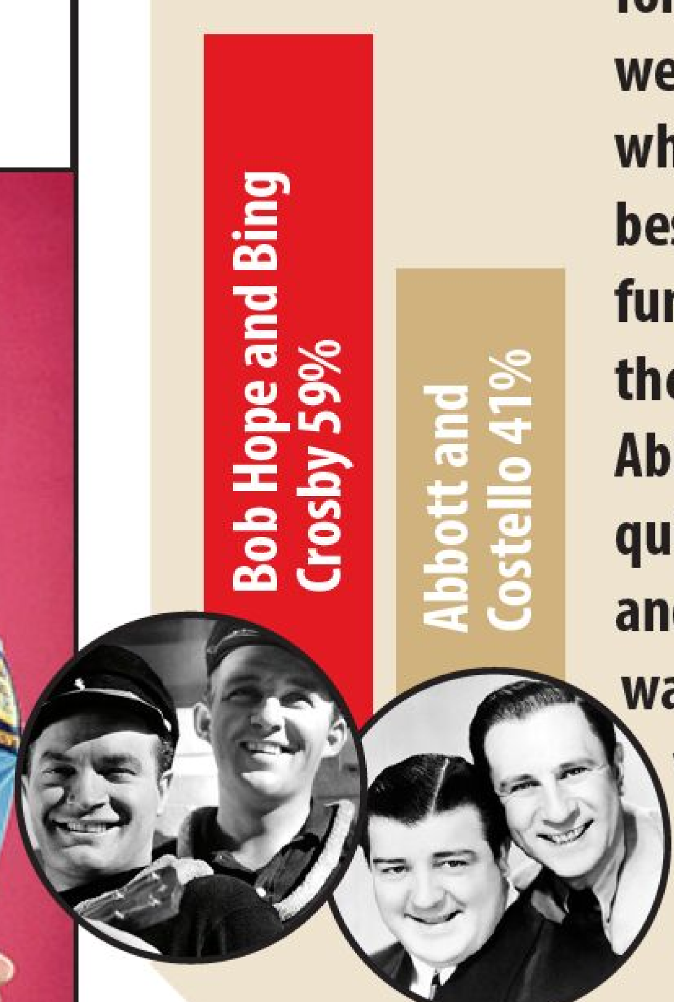
■ I'd love to know what happened to the actor James Best. He was in lots of great films. Is he still acting?
K. North

Retro *says: Known to many as Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane in The Dukes of Hazzard, Best amassed more than 180 acting credits dating back to crime drama One Way Street in 1950. Persistent ill health curtailed his later career and he moved into teaching acting. He died in April 2015 aged 88.*



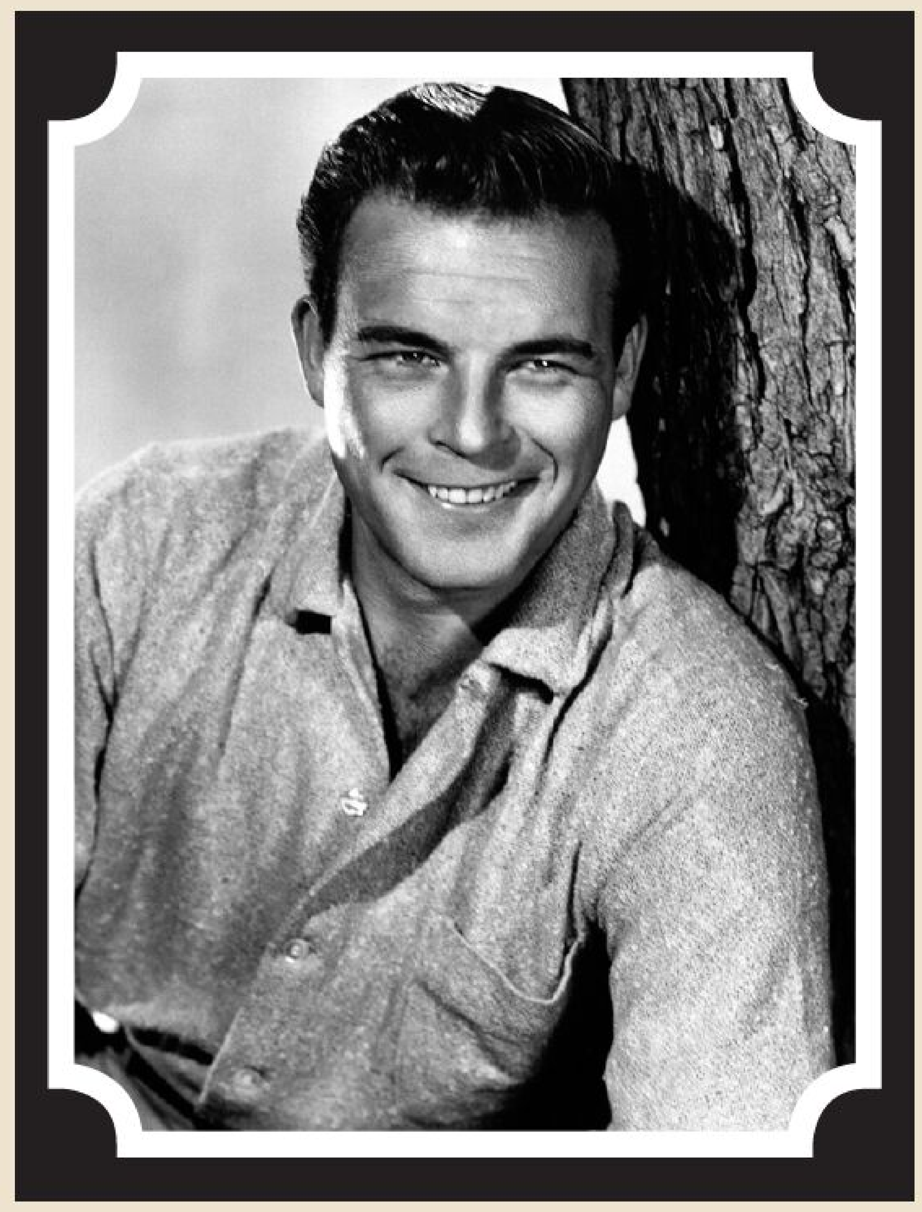
■ I just read a fascinating biography that I'd like to recommend to **Retro** readers – Oliver Postgate's memoir, Seeing Things. I picked it up because he's was from my hometown of Whitstable and it gives a wonderful insight into his work and the inspiration behind Bagpuss, The Clangers, Ivor the Engine and Noggin the Nog.
Sharon Smithers
Retro *says: The book was released in 2010 but is still available online.*

Double the laughs



Comedy double acts are twice the fun and for this month's poll we asked **Retro** fans whose comic capers best tickled their funny bones. Was it the slapstick antics of Abbott and Costello or quickfire quips of Bing and Bob? Although it was a close call, you wanted to be on the road with Hope and Crosby.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO…?



I'd love to know what happened to Scott Brady. I remember he was in a lot of Westerns in the Forties and Fifties. Did he carry on acting?
Margaret Roberts

New Yorker Scott was born in 1924. After school he enlisted in the Navy and, once discharged, followed his older brother Lawrence Tierney who was in LA establishing himself as an actor. Drama school helped rid Scott of his strong Brooklyn accent and soon his handsome looks brought him to the attention of producer Hal B. Wallis.

His debut was in In this Corner (1948) followed by a string of Westerns including Johnny Guitar (1954) and crime stories including He Walked by Night (1948).

He worked steadily on TV switching between heavies and heroes including the lead in Shotgun Slade (1959). He continued to work but the size of the parts dwindled. His final role was Sheriff Frank Reilly in Gremlins (1984).

He died at the age of 60, in 1985, of progressive lung disease.

Retro says: Is there a little-known star you'd like us to find out more about? Write to ask us to find out what happened to your favourites.



35 years ago… July 14, 1989

Zsa Zsa Gabor was arrested for slapping a Beverly Hills motorbike cop who had pulled her over while she was driving her $215,000 Rolls-Royce.

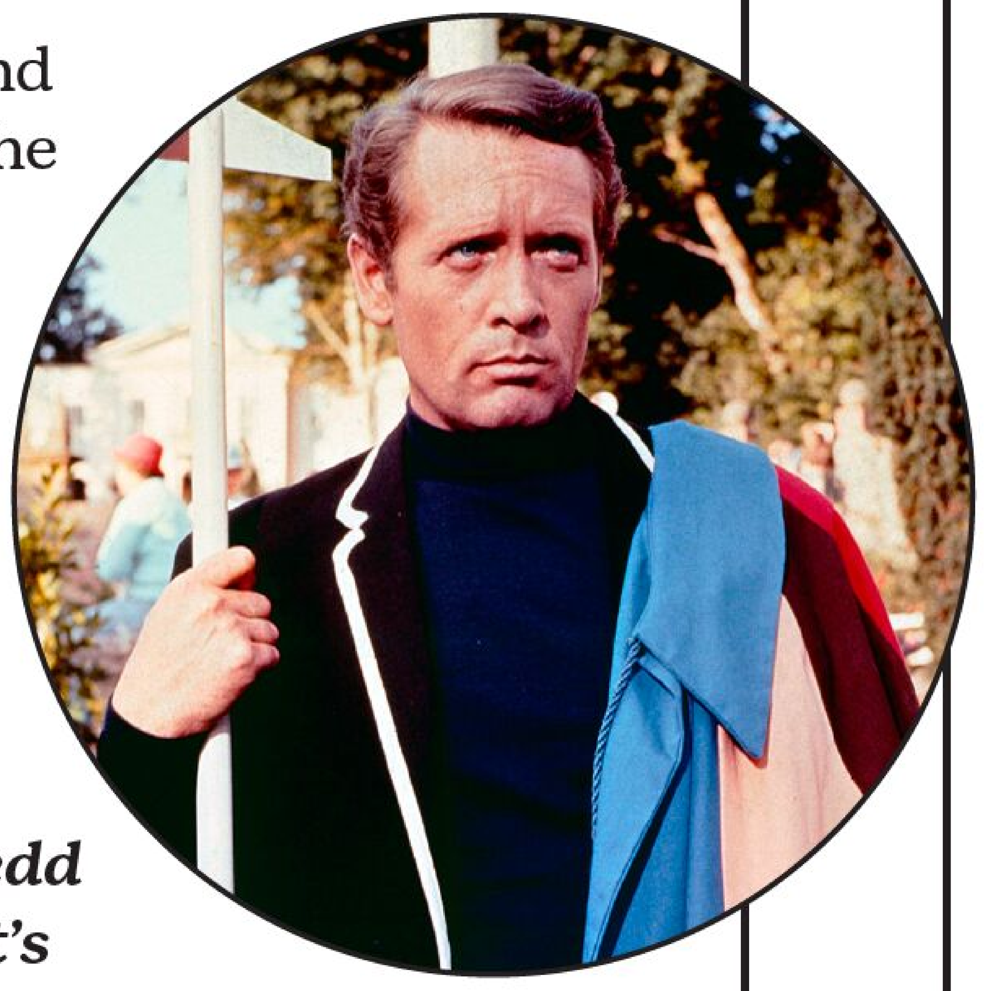
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REEL LOCATION



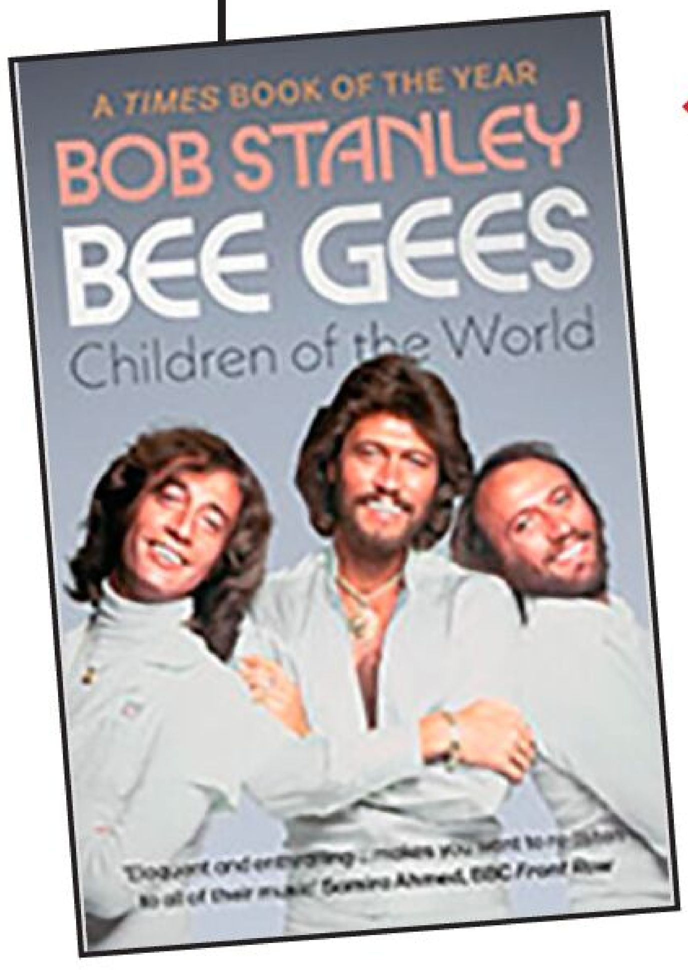
■ One of my all-time favourite films has to be the romantic weepie, Brief Encounter (1945). I know the station used was Carnforth in Lancashire, but can you tell me where I can find the old stone bridge that the couple visit?
Jane Givens, Stourbridge

Retro says: *For one of their illicit assignations, Alec (Trevor Howard) and Laura (Celia Johnson) go for a drive in the countryside and stop for a short walk where they pause crossing a bridge and he poignantly asks if she's happy. To recreate your own Brief Encounter moment you'll need to travel 35 miles north west of Carnforth station to Middle Fell Bridge at Dungeon Ghyll in Cumbria.*



■ I've only recently discovered **Retro** and was wondering if you've ever featured the TV series The Prisoner? I used to really enjoy it and recall once visiting the location where it was filmed but can't remember the name of the place.
C. Inett

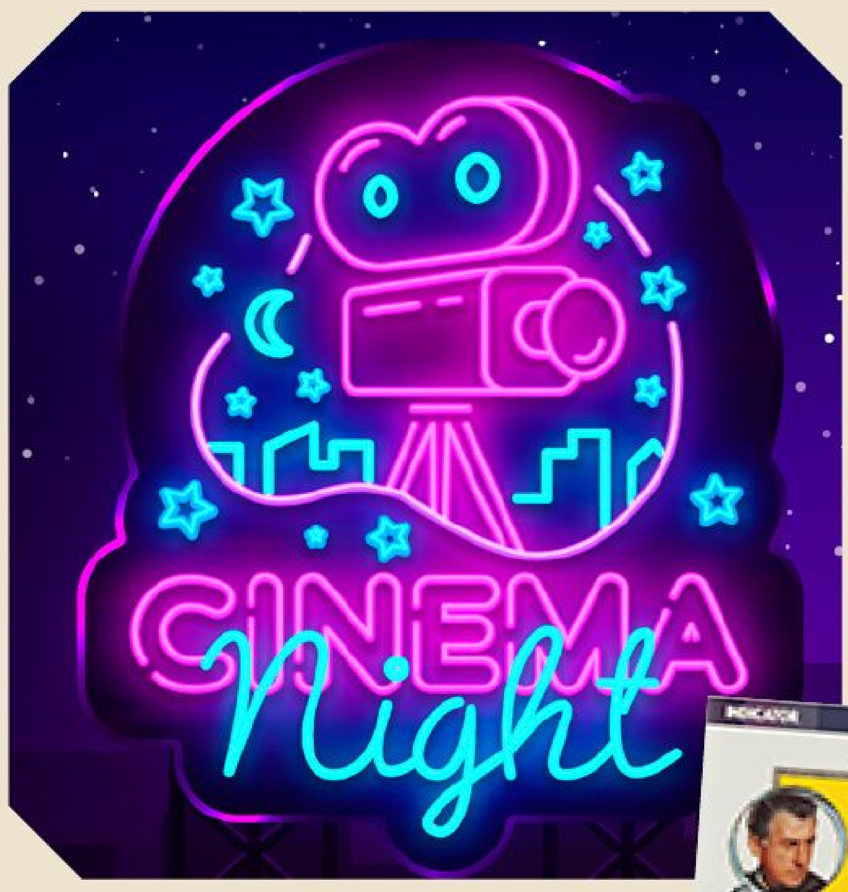
Retro *says: We did a feature on The Prisoner way back in issue 12 and mentioned Portmeirion, the village where it was filmed, which is in Gwynedd on the coast of North Wales. Perhaps it's time we looked at the show again.*



BOOK OF THE MONTH

In Children of the World, award-winning author Bob Stanley unveils the Bee Gees' mesmerising journey through the modern pop era. From Sixties ballads to Nineties hits, the book delves deep into the highs and lows of the enigmatic trio. Stanley's lyrical prose blends biography with musical analysis and highlights the band's resilience amid personal and professional challenges. A must-read for all Bee Gees fans who want to celebrate their enduring legacy.
Out now in paperback (Nine Eight Books, £12.99).

NOW SHOWING





OUT ON BLU-RAY

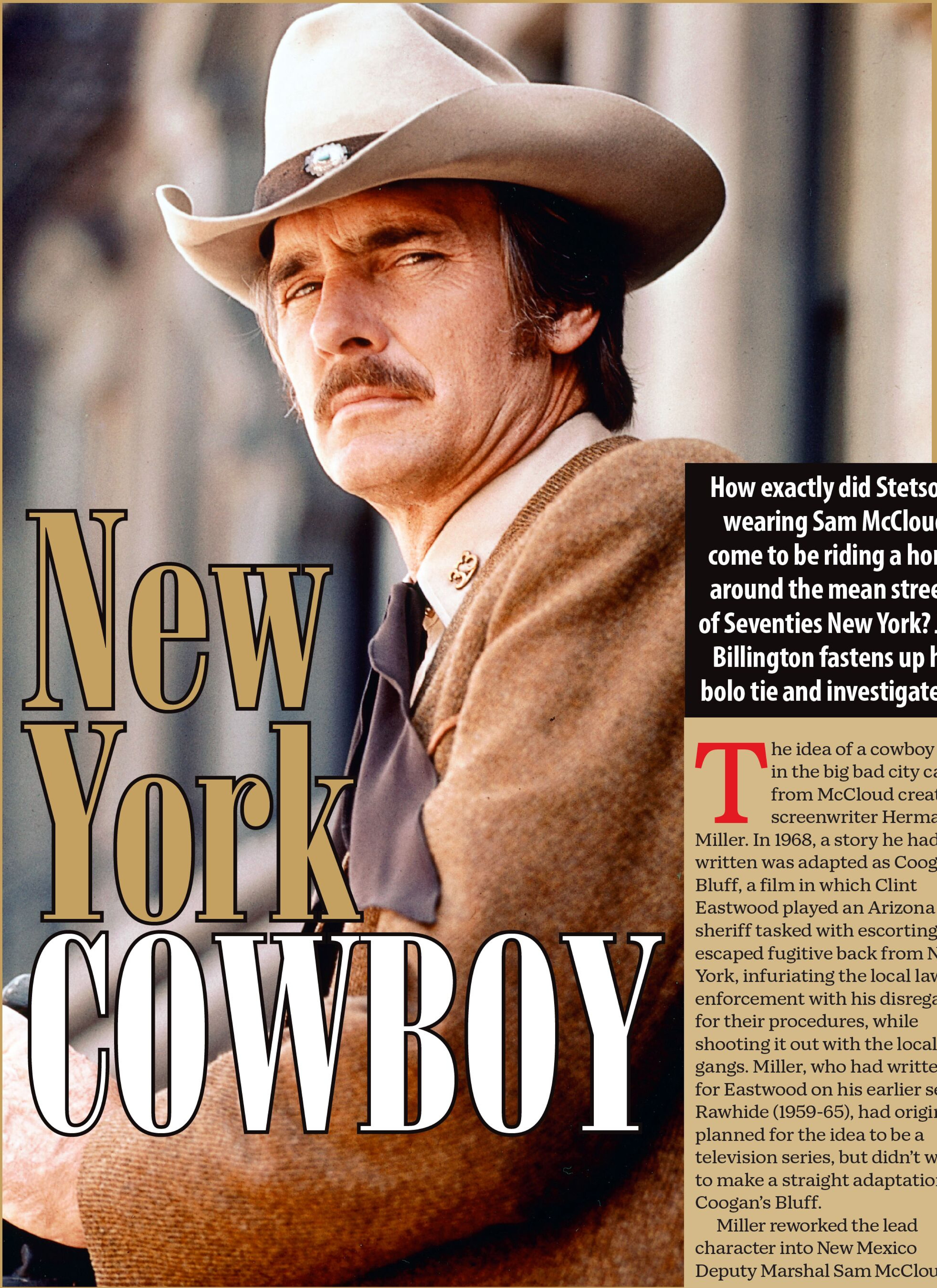
John Guillermin's The Whole Truth (1958) is a taut and stylish murder mystery set on the French Riviera. Max (Stewart Granger) begins an affair with Gina (Gianna Maria Canale), the star of his latest production. Shortly after Gina threatens to tell his wife, Carol (Donna Reed), Gina is found murdered and Max must prove his innocence.
RRP £16.99 (out June 17)

WATCH ON TV

Documentary series, Those British Faces, on Talking Pictures TV focuses on the greats of British cinema such as: Stanley Holloway, Jack Hawkins, Dennis Price, Gracie Fields and Margaret Leighton.
Begins Sunday June 9, 6pm

In the light-hearted comedy Beautiful But Dangerous (1954), Corby Lane (Jean Simmons) is a wealthy woman determined to repay the home town that helped fund an operation she needed as a child. She clashes with the local doctor Robert Sellers (Robert Mitchum) who predicts her plan will cause chaos. Available to stream on BBC iPlayer





New York COWBOY

How exactly did Stetson-wearing Sam McCloud come to be riding a horse around the mean streets of Seventies New York? Jeff Billington fastens up his bolo tie and investigates...

The idea of a cowboy cop in the big bad city came from McCloud creator, screenwriter Herman Miller. In 1968, a story he had written was adapted as Coogan's Bluff, a film in which Clint Eastwood played an Arizona sheriff tasked with escorting an escaped fugitive back from New York, infuriating the local law enforcement with his disregard for their procedures, while shooting it out with the local gangs. Miller, who had written for Eastwood on his earlier series Rawhide (1959-65), had originally planned for the idea to be a television series, but didn't want to make a straight adaptation of Coogan's Bluff.

Miller reworked the lead character into New Mexico Deputy Marshal Sam McCloud,

an avuncular 'good old boy' who becomes a special investigator for the NYPD. Dennis Weaver, a familiar figure to Western fans for having played Chester Goode in Gunsmoke (1955-75) for almost a decade, was cast in the lead. To contrast the part with Eastwood's taciturn Coogan, the characterisation of McCloud drew on the real-life personality of Bat Masterson, a Dodge City gunslinger (and former associate of Wyatt Earp) who moved to New York in the early 20th Century, becoming an unlikely celebrity with his tales of the Wild West.

COWBOY IN TOWN

Miller envisioned the show as a hybrid of police procedural and modern-day Western. Premiering with a pilot episode in February 1970, the show's attraction lay with the incongruity of the moustachioed Weaver, with his Stetson, sheepskin and six-shooter, striding – or even riding – through the Big Apple in cowboy boots (with spurs), being greeted with a mixture of suspicion and bemusement by the locals. With suspects often assuming he was a country bumpkin, McCloud used their underestimation of his intelligence to his advantage, allowing him to get close and tease out information. Though essentially good-natured and uncynical, McCloud was typically bemused at the modern world and modern police work, complaining that a computer database of criminal files was an infringement of personal freedom.

McCloud spoke in a rapid-fire mixture of country slang and homespun philosophy, delivered in a deep Southern drawl, with the exclamation, "There ya go!" becoming his catchphrase. He often expounded his no-nonsense approach to police work: "According to the law, I'm supposed to inform you of your rights... it all boils down to, 'Keep your mouth shut'." His tenacity made sure he always caught the bad guys, while his positivity and charm worked a treat





Before Dynasty… Linda Evans as Geri March in the 1973 episode Butch Cassidy Rides Again



Joan Blondell, Lady Fingers in The Cincinnatti Kid (1965), guest starred in Top of the World, Ma!







Chief Clifford, played by J.D. Cannon (*left*) had a grudging respect for McCloud

DID YOU KNOW? The title sequence of McCloud showed the World Trade Center under construction.

on the ladies, with many female guest stars ending up in a clinch with McCloud. This was especially true of semi-regular character, journalist Chris Coughlin (Diana Muldaur), whose upper-crust trappings contrasted McCloud's down-to-earth attitude, making them an odd but likeable couple.

OUTLANDISH PLOTS

McCloud was often the butt of insults, particularly those of his boss, Chief Clifford, played by J.D. Cannon, which he typically received with feigned bemusement. Most episodes featured a furious Clifford tearing a strip off McCloud due to rule book infractions, becoming more agitated when faced with his underling's laid-back demeanour, with McCloud typically responding to his dressing down with, "Appreciate it, chief." Sam's usual partner was Sergeant Joe Broadhurst (Terry Carter), a streetwise black officer who offered a counterpoint to McCloud's cheery disposition. Putting the two together and having them become loyal friends contrasted stereotypes about Southern bigotry during the civil rights era – McCloud was a non-judgemental man who took people as he found them.

A key feature of the show was to riff on famous movies for its big action scenes. For example, in This Must Be the Alamo, the show recreated the famous siege when a gambling syndicate attacks the precinct headquarters. Top of the World, Ma! featured a take on James Cagney's famous demise in the 1949 film, White Heat. Perhaps the most ridiculous, and most entertaining, was Butch Cassidy Rides Again, in which a group of septuagenarian gunslingers in full cowboy attire model themselves on the infamous Hole in the Wall Gang, staging bank robberies and train hold-ups, leading to a pursuit on horseback through the streets of Manhattan.

These outlandish plots led to a degree of criticism that the show was not reflecting the reality of New York life. The city had entered a period of decline and was, at that time, a hotbed of criminal violence, while McCloud, mostly shot in a studio in Los Angeles, tended to be upbeat. There were exceptions, however, and the show could get dark when it wanted to. 'Twas the Fight Before Christmas featured a hired killer, suicide and orphans held hostage by drug addicts – and this was a festive special!

McCloud ran for seven seasons, racking up 45 episodes. After the first hour-long series, it was expanded to feature length and shown as part of the NBC Sunday Mystery Movie, in rotation with – Rock Hudson's McMillan and Wife (1971-77) and Peter Falk's Columbo (1971-78). This meant only one episode was needed every three to four weeks, ensuring audiences never got bored with the premise. High-profile guest stars queued up to appear in the series, including Julie Newmar, Burgess Meredith, Stefanie Powers, Ricky Nelson, and Britt Ekland.

The last episode of McCloud aired in April 1977, and saw the detective taking on a vampiric killer who drains the blood of his victims. While continuing to work on television and film, Weaver would go on to devote much of his time to his environmentalist concerns, promoting alternative fuel sources and vegetarianism, and living in a house built from recycled materials, known as Earthship. His political beliefs were reflected in his one-off return to the role in 1989, with the TV movie The Return of Sam McCloud, in which McCloud has become a senator who takes on the chemical magnate who killed his niece.

McCloud's fish-out-of-water premise was a frequent target for comedy shows from Benny Hill to The Simpsons – for the latter, Weaver played a parody of the character called McTrigger. Weaver died in 2006, aged 81. More than 50 years since the show first graced our screens, McCloud remains a much-loved and oft-repeated series.

A fine BROMA

In a lot of ways, the roles of Henry II and his friend Thomas Becket in the prestige historical drama Becket (1964) could have been written for Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton. Much like their characters in the film – at least until the King appoints Becket as his Archbishop – the actor pals were heavy-drinking hellraisers and womanisers.

They were also fast-rising stars, with Burton telling his co-star when filming back at Shepperton Studios under the direction of Peter Glenville, "Let's face it, at this moment you and I are the two hottest actors on the planet. I think Becket will be the prestige movie of the year, but not necessarily the box office champion. Both of us will probably end up being nominated for an Oscar."

Richard was right. The film was a critical success but was dwarfed by such blockbuster hits as Mary Poppins, My Fair Lady and Goldfinger (all 1964). It did, however, earn Oscar nominations for its leading men. They lost out to My Fair Lady's Rex Harrison, but the film was a classy, classic drama that solidified their friendship.

Burton was born in 1925 into a Welsh family. O'Toole was born in Leeds seven years later to an Irish father and a Scottish mother. Richard was already well-established when Peter began stage work in the Fifties and the younger man idolised him, attending



DID YOU KNOW?

Burton was nominated for an Academy Award seven times but never won. O'Toole was nominated eight times and was finally presented with an honorary Oscar in 2002.

NCE?

Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton starred together in Becket but, Simon Button investigates, did they get on in real life?



many of Burton's Shakespearean performances at the Old Vic. In a pub across the street from the theatre he'd see the older actor "make merry, impressing me with his joy and vitality" and said, "I longed to be part of his company and, in time, I got my wish."

They had a mutual friend in actor Wilfrid Lawson, who rivalled their capacity for heavy drinking if not their eventual star status, and it's likely they met through him. The two men had much in common. Burton was deeply patriotic about his Welshness, just as O'Toole proudly embraced his Irish roots. They both had drunken fathers and came from working-class families.

PEAS IN A POD

There were differences too: The Welshman studied at Oxford while the Irishman left school as soon as he was allowed. The former joined the RAF, the latter served in the Navy. But they were united by a love of acting and alcohol. In the early days of their friendship they lived near each other in Hampstead and would get so drunk they'd have to help the other home.

There were resentments along the way, like when O'Toole got good reviews for Look Back in Anger on stage but lost out on the 1959 film version to Burton. He also suspected that Burton had had an affair with Siân Phillips before she and O'Toole officially became an item.

But then fidelity was in neither man's blood, with O'Toole once declaring: "Dickie Burton and I have the same problem. He may have the most beautiful woman in the world at home in his bed [Elizabeth Taylor at the time] but that doesn't mean he ceases to pursue that extra piece."

By the time Becket came around, Burton had two Oscar nominations under his belt – for



Real life hard drinkers Burton and O'Toole dazzled audiences in the epic Becket

My Cousin Rachel (1952) and The Robe (1953) – and had won a Tony for Camelot on Broadway in 1961. O'Toole also had an Oscar nomination for Lawrence of Arabia (1962), even if Burton had been director David Lean's first choice.

Although he never discussed it publicly himself, O'Toole reportedly had a fling with Elizabeth Taylor shortly before her on-off relationship with Burton began. Peter apparently met with her at London's Dorchester Hotel to talk about him playing Mark Antony in Cleopatra (1963). In the end the role went to Burton, but O'Toole, who at the time was married to Phillips, began a tryst with Taylor that lasted for a decade.

THICK AND THIN

Things would come to a head between the two men on the set of the Taylor-Burton film Boom! (1968) when O'Toole visited the couple and, during a drunken brawl, confessed to the affair and supposedly even said, "And she tells me I'm much better in the sack." Burton's reaction remains unknown but it seems it didn't affect the actors' friendship, which was a bromance long before the term was coined. As Peter once declared, "Every man needs a good husband. Dickie Burton fulfils that role for me." To another interviewer he said, "My relationship with him is both professional and personal. We are rivals but dear friends."

And they got on like a house on fire when making Becket. At first they surprised everyone by drinking tea and completing crosswords, but soon they were up to their old tricks, arriving on set inebriated, but somehow sobering up as soon as the cameras rolled.

A proper on-screen reunion wouldn't happen again until Under Milk Wood in 1972, but O'Toole popped up as an extra in The Sandpiper (1965) and Burton returned the favour by cameoing in What's New Pussycat (1965). However, Taylor didn't approve of their friendship. After the trio starred in Under Milk Wood, O'Toole was visiting Rome when he discovered that Burton and Taylor were staying in the same hotel. Richard met him on the sly and told Peter that Liz "does not approve of our racing around together".

They didn't speak again for many years, although Burton rallied round in 1980 when critics slaughtered O'Toole for his "deranged" performance in Macbeth at the Old Vic. As Richard recalled in his posthumously published diaries, he called Peter and told him to take heart at the fact the audience was packed every night, adding, "You are the most original actor to come out of Britain since the war... Don't give in and I love you."

Peter was devastated when his former drinking buddy died from a haemorrhage four years later. Burton's widow Sally said Richard lost touch with a lot of people when he was with Liz, but it seemed the bond between the two men remained strong. As she put it, "I think had they happened to be in the same restaurant at the same time they would have fallen upon each other with great amusement."

And no doubt lots of alcohol.



Burton and O'Toole were reunited, alongside Elizabeth Taylor, in Under Milk Wood, eight years after they appeared together in Becket in 1964

DID YOU KNOW?

For the intrepid adventurers in The Man Who Would Be King (1975) director John Huston wanted to cast Burton and O'Toole, but eventually settled on Sean Connery and Michael Caine as they were bigger box office draws.

SCREEN CHIC
MOVIE STYLE



FILM: CALAMITY JANE (1953)

ICONIC COSTUME: A fringed buckskin two-piece made up of trousers and a jacket, worn over a blue plaid shirt, topped off with a gun belt, red neckerchief and Breton cap.
SHE WORE IT WELL: Doris Day
DESIGNED BY: Howard Shoup
SHOWSTOPPING SCENE: Fearless and boisterous Calamity Jane cracks the whip and brings the Deadwood stagecoach into town.

■ For most of the story hard-ridin', sharp-shootin' tough gal Jane rails against gender norms, refusing to act 'ladylike' and taking on masculine mannerisms, until she dons a buttercup-yellow day dress and an extravagant tulle-covered ballgown to impress her crush Gilmartin (Philip Carey). But before long she's back in buckskin and realises it's really her frenemy Wild Bill Hickok (Howard Keel) that's the man for her.

■ Hired by Warner Bros. in 1935, Shoup was resented by the studio's chief costume designer Orry-Kelly and was mostly set to work on lower-budget pictures. He moved to MGM in the Forties but returned to Warner in the Fifties and, over the course of a 35-year career, amassed over 160 film credits including Born to Sing (1942), Pete Kelly's Blues (1955), A Summer Place (1959), Ocean's Eleven (1960), Hotel (1967) and his penultimate picture Cool Hand Luke (1967).

■ He was co-founder of the Costume Designers Guild formed to "advance the economic, professional and cultural interests of its members." He served as the group's president for four terms.

■ Shoup received five Oscar nominations, all towards the end of his career; The Young Philadelphians (1959), The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond (1960), Claudelle Inglish (1961), Kisses for My President (1964) and A Rage to Live (1965).

DID YOU KNOW?

The horse Day is seen riding belonged to Western star Joel McCrea who rode him in more than 20 films.



Welcome to a cinematic journey through some of Old Hollywood's most memorable screen slaps. Amy Ahmed-Dolphin is your guide…

OUCH!

A slap-up tour of Hollywood



Many a slap has echoed through film history, marking pivotal points of emotion, drama and comedy. Depending on one's ethics and values, these flashes of violence have proved entertaining or controversial... or sometimes both simultaneously. From romantic rows and family feuds to criminal confrontations and madcap monkeyshines, the slaps curated here have regardless become iconic big-screen moments.

The sourpuss

In The Public Enemy (1931) Jean Harlow-James Cagney gangster movie, the uncredited role of Kitty probably didn't seem like much of a part for jobbing actress Mae Clarke. And yet, the breakfast scene in which Cagney's Tom Powers slaps his grapefruit into Kitty's face, sadistically squeezing the juice around her eyes, became a notorious film moment and a scene for which Clarke would forever be remembered.

Powers' motivation: he was bored with her. The act was unscripted, Clarke said; devised by Cagney, recalling a story of real-life gangster Hymie Weiss hurling an omelette in his girlfriend's face. "Omelette too messy," Cagney later explained. "Grapefruit was better."

Bitter blows

Woe betide anyone who shared a scene with Vivien Leigh in David O. Selznick's epic romantic drama. Scarlett O'Hara embodies the fiery spirit of the South, with her passionate outbursts ranging from petulant to defiant as the story develops.

Scarlett's slaps in Gone with the Wind (1939) span a range of targets, from her would-be beau to her sister and one of the household slaves. Lesley Howard's Ashley Wilkes receives a blow for his marital betrayal. Evelyn Keyes' Suellen gets reprimanded for her disloyalty to their home, Tara. And Butterfly McQueen's Prissy meets with an almighty wallop for her ineptitude in a moment of acute crisis when she admits to knowing "nuthin' 'bout birthin' babies". McQueen later professed to hating the "backward" role of Prissy yet declared that she herself would have slapped her for being so whiny and lazy.



Slap-happy

The Abbott and Costello movies were a hotbed of physical comedy, with countless slapstick-driven scenes displaying the duo's impeccable timing and chemistry. Billed as a "jaunt with a haunt", Hold That Ghost (1941) was wildly popular with critics and fans alike. It's all in the tagline: "Those slap-happy screamsters go a'haunting!"

This particular slap scene, however, sees Costello playing opposite Joan Davis as their characters (Ferdie and Camille) bicker over who has slapped who – while unaware of the true culprit... the ghostly presence behind them. Finally, after the lights go out and mayhem ensues, Camille loses patience and belts Ferdie.





Reprimand rap

On her journey along the yellow brick road in The Wizard of Oz (1939) Dorothy has already made friends with the Scarecrow and Tin Man when they encounter the Cowardly Lion. Growling, he appears from the bushes attempting to look fierce but is met a reprimanding slap and "shame on you!" from Dorothy when he tries to bite little Toto. You can see in the final film that Judy Garland is struggling to keep from laughing at Bert Lahr's performance.



The actor who snapped and slapped back

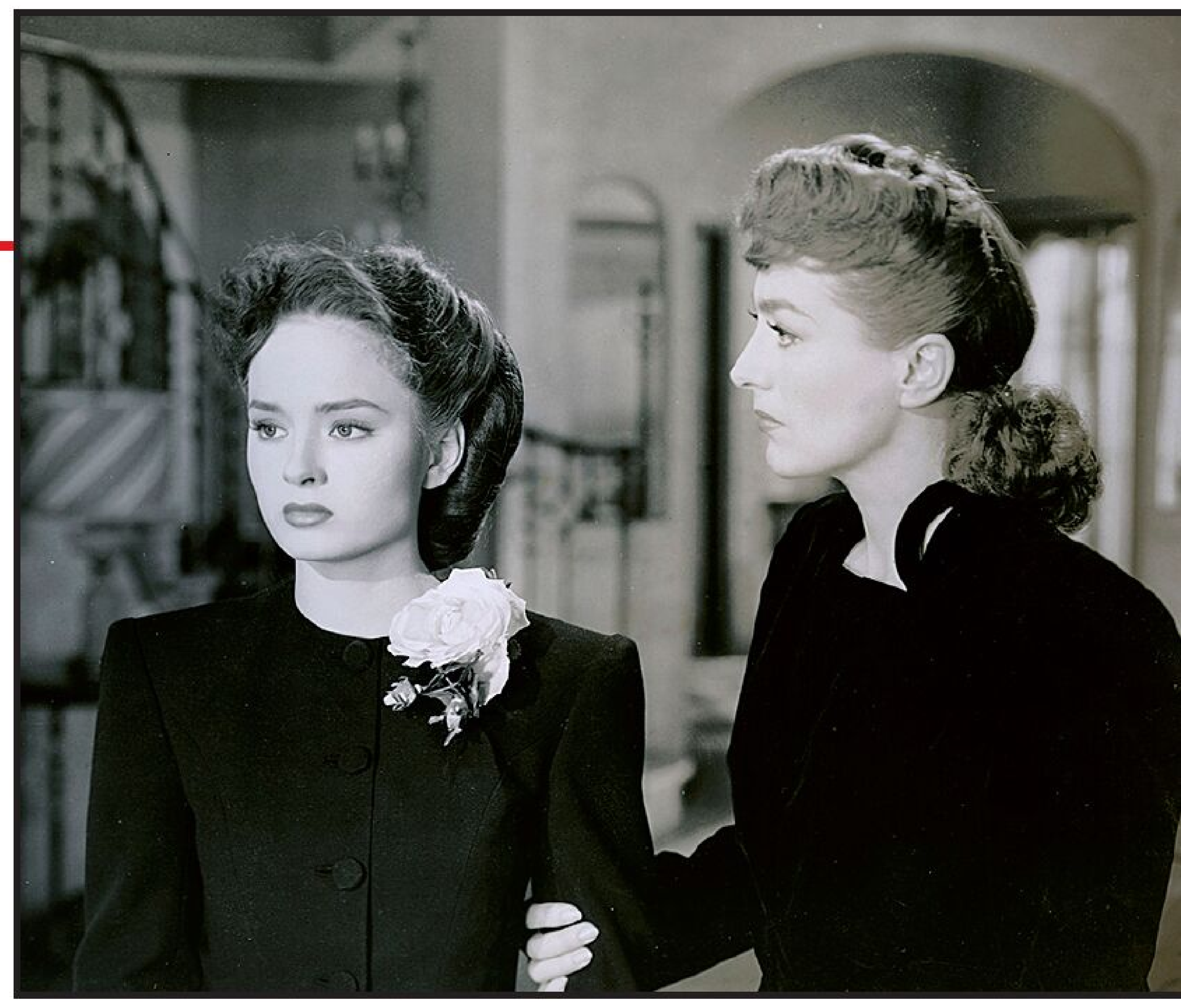
The making of Angel Face (1952) was a troubled shoot, owing to producer Howard Hughes' bitter resentment following his leading lady, Jean Simmons (then wed to Stewart Granger), refusing the tycoon's obsessive advances. Simmons defiantly chopped her hair off midway through production to anger Hughes, exasperated by his persistent demands regarding its styling. In retaliation, Hughes then instructed director Otto Preminger to get co-star Robert Mitchum to strike Simmons in repeated takes, harder and harder each time... until Mitchum, ever the gent, whipped around (as some reports go) and slugged Preminger in retaliation.



Oscar-worthy

The chemistry in Mildred Pierce (1945) between Joan Crawford and Ann Blyth as her spoiled daughter, Veda, achieved a powerful portrayal of a toxic mother-daughter relationship.

Great friends off screen, each threw everything emotionally and physically into their scenes, intent on making them as realistic as possible. Approaching the pivotal scene when Veda strikes her mother, Crawford told Blyth not to hold back… resulting in a highly dramatic moment that shocked audiences upon its release and left Crawford with a smarting cheek. At a special Hollywood screening of the picture in 2013 (attended by Blyth), the whole audience cheered when Mildred finally returns the gesture and slaps Veda.

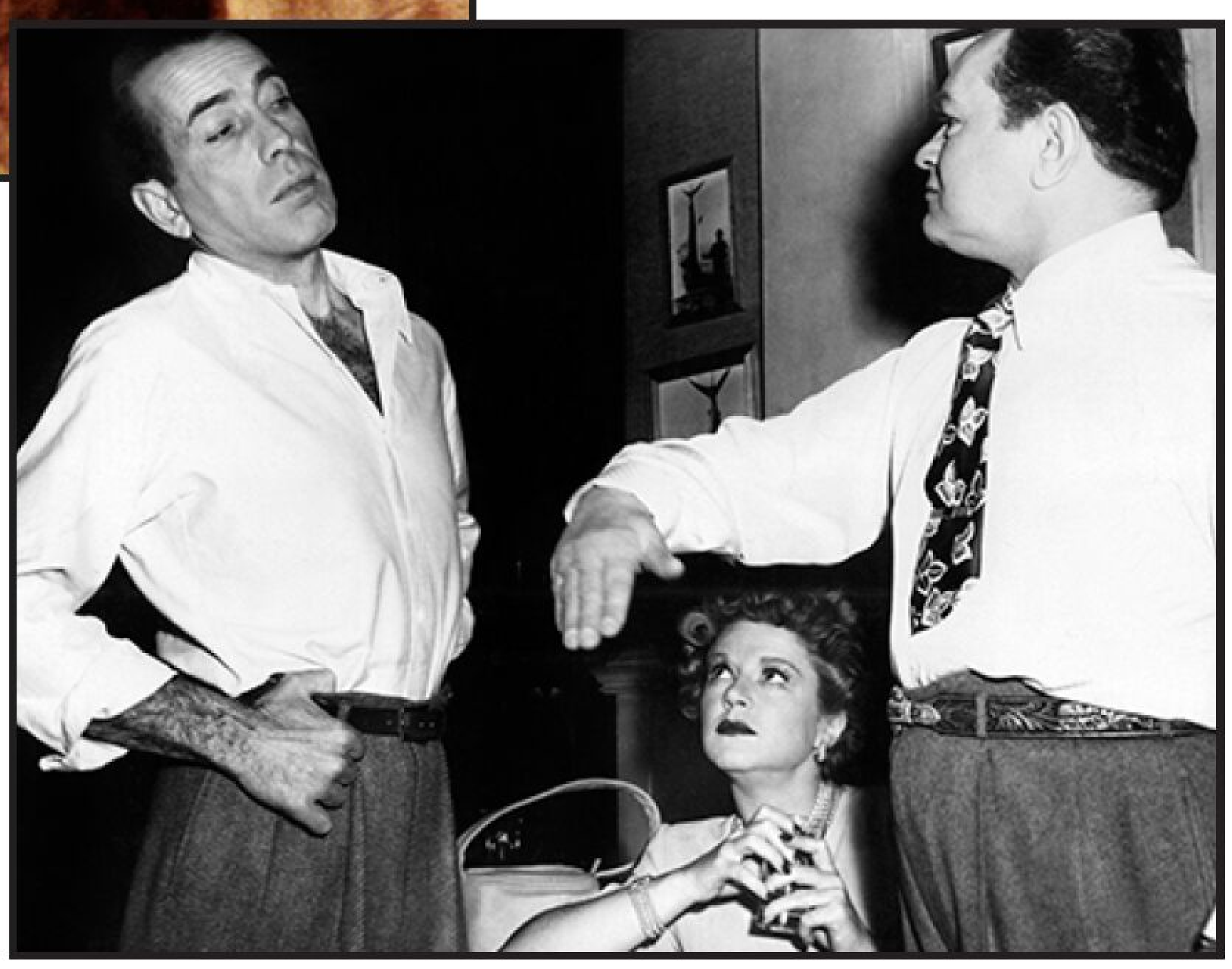




A strike heard around the world

The physical exchange between Sidney Poitier's Detective Virgil Tibbs and the Mississippi town patriarch, Mr Endicott (played by Larry Gates), in In the Heat of the Night (1967), was immediately noted by critics as an unforgettable movie moment. Endicott strikes Tibbs in outrage at the notion of a black man lawfully questioning his activities. Instinctively, Tibbs retaliates and slaps him back. Within the scene, while Endicott stands astounded, his servant (Jester Hairston) and Police Chief Gillespie (Rod Steiger) are rendered utterly speechless.

For the first time in American cinema, a black man had struck a white man back. "We broke that taboo," said director Norman Jewison. The moment had a profound impact on viewers of all ages and inspiring prominent political figures such as Robert F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela to keep fighting for civil rights.



Triple whammy

Some newspapers singled out the slap in Key Largo (1948) as one of the film noir's dramatic highlights. "Bogart Gets Slapped In 'Key Largo' Film," led one review… while failing to mention he is slapped not once, but thrice.

Humphrey Bogart is Frank McCloud, an Army veteran in lockdown at a Florida Keys hotel waiting out a hurricane. Also present is gangster Johnny Rocco, played by Edward G. Robinson, and a handful of his underworld associates. As the storm rages, tensions build to a punctuating moment of physical confrontation. Rocco delivers a powerful, bish-bash-bosh triple slap to McCloud. Seemingly, Robinson had to hit Bogart hard in order to get the right sound effect.

DID YOU KNOW?

In one of cinema history's highest ranked slap scenes, the 1980 comedy, Airplane!, poked fun at Old Hollywood's man-slaps-woman-to-calm-her-down remedy by having a polite single file queue – starting with the stewardess and including a nun, a boxer and a gun-wielding lady – line up to smack Lee Bryant's hysterical character in the face.





The band had several line-ups, including Dave Knights, Matthew Fisher, Robin Trower, B.J. Wilson and Gary Brooker

PROCOL HARUM
Beyond the pale

Lin Bensley charts the convoluted history of Procol Harum's most played song of all time

On April 17, 1967, A Whiter Shade of Pale by Procol Harum was first aired on The Roman Empire show hosted by DJ Mark Roman, broadcasting from the pirate station Radio London anchored in the choppy waters of the North Sea.

When Roman invited listeners to phone in with their opinion of the song the station's switchboard became jammed, prompting record label Decca to hurriedly press thousands of copies in readiness for a global release on May 12.

Within two weeks it had climbed to No.13 in the UK charts; the same week that The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album was released, and so heralded the beginning of that Summer of Love.

Soon the song topped the charts where it remained for six weeks and became the anthem for the whole flower power movement that saw the rise of such bands as Pink Floyd, Traffic, The Move, Tyrannosaurus Rex, and The Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Procol Harum was formed out of a pressing necessity. Following the break-up of Southend-based R&B band the Paramounts, their former vocalist/pianist Gary Brooker teamed up with lyricist Keith Reid with the intention of composing songs they could sell to established acts.

CLASSICAL MEETS ROCK

When nobody seemed interested in what the duo had to offer, they decided to form their own group, and, with a name derived from a blue Burmese cat, Procol Harum recorded a selection of Brooker and Reid's material with Denny Cordell as producer. Among those initial songs they recorded, A Whiter Shade of Pale was the stand-out track that came to the attention of producer and promoter Tony Hall when it was licensed to Decca's newly launched progressive label Deram.

Captivated by the song's reflective organ figure and Dylanesque lyrics, Hall stayed up all night playing a demo of the song over and over. Instinctively aware of the song's massive hit potential, he sent the feted demo to Radio London informing the station's boss Alan Keen that he had a worldwide exclusive for a song that seamlessly welded classical and rock music into one genre.

The likes of Lennon and McCartney, Pete Townshend, Cat Stevens, Eric Burdon, and Beach Boy Brian Wilson were instantly enamoured with the song that reputedly influenced The Beatles when they came to record I Am the Walrus.

As an international hit, it went on to sell more than 10 million copies, making it one of the most successful records of all time, with more than 1,000 cover versions by various artists, it has been featured in many films, and has become a favourite at both weddings and funerals.

Reid always said he got the title for the song from a chance remark he heard at a party that inspired him to write the enigmatic lyrics, which have continued to baffle and bemuse fans and critics ever since. Despite the reference to The Miller's Tale, Reid always denied he had ever read Chaucer and, while several lines serve to place the song in a historical context, he later cited the likes of Harold Pinter and Dylan Thomas were as much an influence upon his early work as Bob Dylan.

Many people are unaware that the song originally included two further verses that confirm it was set on board a ship, with hints of an emotional entanglement and underwater Neptunian adventures. During rehearsals, it was decided by the group that the song (with a running time of more than eight minutes) would require substantial pruning before it could ever be considered as suitable single material, and so the second and third verses were axed!

Besides Brooker's soulful vocal, it is the haunting Hammond organ sound that defines the song; a combination of stately and hymnal tones that conspire to suggest an inescapable air of melancholy suffused with an aching pathos. Sad songs always say so much.

A darker side to the song's evolution began to emerge when organist Matthew Fisher first realised that authorship would be ascribed solely to Brooker and Reid. Adamant that his contribution to the overall sound warranted a writing credit, he approached Brooker to voice his dissatisfaction. Brooker dismissed his claim out of hand and refused to discuss the matter further.

A quiet and reserved individual, Fisher felt aggrieved but believed he had a better chance of safeguarding his livelihood by remaining a member of the band. Over the course of their first three albums, he would continue to collaborate on several songs with Brooker and Reid, and played a major role in shaping the band's musical identity before he quit in 1969 to concentrate on producing and pursuing a solo career.

LEGAL CHALLENGE

For Fisher, his sense of injustice continued to smoulder and, on his 1973 solo debut album, Journey's End, the track Going for a Song obliquely voices his frustrations.

Perversely, some might say, Fisher rejoined the band in 1991 and remained until 2003 and, while he again made several notable additions to the band's musical canon, unresolved issues



DID YOU KNOW?

A Whiter Shade of Pale was the first single that Annie Lennox ever bought. She included her own mesmerising interpretation on her album, Medusa (1995) that was later released as a single and charted in the UK and across Europe.



"We skipped the light fandango…" Procol Harum's hit song became a classic

continued to rankle. In 2004 he decided to instigate proceedings against Brooker and his music publisher to stake his claim to co-authorship of A Whiter Shade of Pale. Questions were duly asked as to why Fisher had waited so many years before filing a lawsuit against his former colleagues, but it soon became apparent that he harboured a deep mistrust of those who had denied him the recognition he deserved.

In court, Brooker explained how he had adapted Bach's Air on a G String after hearing the Hamlet cigar advert on TV, and stated that he alone had scored the parts for piano and organ throughout. Fisher contested Brooker's assertion; insisting he had composed the introduction and the eight-bar solo between verses based on Bach's Sleepers Wake which gave the song its most distinctive aspect.

Legal costs spiralled for both parties as the case passed from High Court to the Court of Appeal, before eventually making its way to the House of Lords for a final ruling. The case set a precedent insomuch as no copyright dispute involving a song had ever previously reached the House of Lords.

In July 2009, the Law Lords ruled unanimously in Fisher's favour and awarded him 40 per cent of all future royalties. Five years of judicial wrangling had taken their toll on all involved in the whole sorry debacle. The story of the song itself has spun a tale more tangled and tearful than anything the miller could ever have imagined. A paler shade of sadness.

MITZI
A star with razzle dazzle

Simon Button looks at the life and work of the South Pacific star, Mitzi Gaynor, who is the very epitome of an all-round entertainer and showbiz trooper

Modestly singing her own praises, Mitzi Gaynor once declared: "Gene Kelly said dancing is a man's game. Women have to do the same thing in heels, and have to sing and smile at the same time. Professional athletes don't even have to do that – and they get to wear sneakers."

Gaynor most famously danced, sang and smiled – not to mention acted – her way to a Golden Globe nomination as plucky Nellie Forbush in South Pacific (1958). An all-round entertainer, she went on to headline nine TV specials, has performed in Las Vegas and around the US and Canada and, at age of 92, still actively engages with fans on social media.



Mitzi's parents encouraged her love of singing and dancing

She's the very epitome of a showbiz trooper who seemed destined to be a star of stage, screen and TV, joking, "I may have been performing in the womb" about her arrival in 1931 into a family that included a musician father and a dancer mother.

Born in Chicago as Francesca Marlene de Czanyi von Gerber, she was of Hungarian descent and said: "My family gave me every opportunity to experience theatre, music and art. What a gift that was! We weren't wealthy in monetary



DID YOU KNOW?

When Mitzi sang the Georgy Girl theme tune at the 1967 Academy Awards, standing in for the song's original singers The Seekers, she stopped the show as the audience leapt to its feet and wouldn't sit down.

DID YOU KNOW? South Pacific was screened for an incredible four and a half years at London's Dominion Theatre and beat Gone with the Wind (1939) as the UK's highest-grossing film, although it flopped in the likes of Germany, Italy and France.

terms, but we were certainly wealthy in love." That was during the Great Depression. "And though we didn't have much," she added, "they sacrificed a lot so I could take ballet lessons or attend the theatre. It was such a gift."

When Mitzi was 11 the family moved to Los Angeles, where she trained as a ballerina and, at age 13, made her professional debut performing for the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera company. "It was all incredible training for me and really gave me a great foundation and the discipline needed for my work in movies," she recalled of the relatively short time before she landed a contract with Twentieth Century-Fox when she was just 17.

Changing her name from Gerber to Gaynor, her first film was the musical My Blue Heaven (1950) opposite Betty Grable – which she said was a life-changing experience. "I mean, can you imagine my thrill in having the chance to make my first movie with Betty Grable?" Mitzi marvelled, "The Betty Grable! My idol! It was amazing!"

Around the time of the film's production, she met and "fell in lust" with Howard Hughes, later declaring that he was drawn to her because "I was 18 and I was so hot!"

They dated for eight months but she turned down his marriage proposal because he was 29 years her senior. Instead, she wed producer and agent Jack Bean. The couple stayed together until his death in 2006, with Mitzi saying, "Jack was my whole life – my breakfast, lunch and dinner." But she remained grateful to Hughes for advising her to buy "some dirt" in Las Vegas that she eventually sold for $2 million.

Bean encouraged her to star in the Western Three Young Texans (1954), after which her career really took off when she appeared as part of the Donahue vaudeville clan in There's No Business Like Show Business (1954).

SINATRA ON HER SIDE

Starring opposite Gene Kelly in Les Girls (1957) was a personal highlight, with Gaynor saying, "I adored Gene. I mean, can you imagine the thrill of being lifted by Gene Kelly?"

South Pacific propelled her to international stardom but she wasn't the first choice for Nellie Forbush. Susan Hayward, Doris Day and even Elizabeth Taylor were all in the running but, as Mitzi put it, "I could sing and I could dance. Liz Taylor couldn't sing and she couldn't dance."

She also had Frank Sinatra to thank for helping her secure the part. She'd already met with director Joshua Logan and composer Richard Rodgers but was needed on the set of The Joker is Wild (1957) on the only day lyricist Oscar Hammerstein was free. Her co-star told her: "OK, honey, we'll shoot around you. Go get the job."

Filmed mainly on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, it was a dream job that landed Mitzi a Golden Globe nomination and lots of happy memories. Among them was having Hammerstein on set. "Oscar would stop by occasionally to direct us," she recalled. "He was a thin guy with a prominent belly, and he would put his arms behind his back and point out directions with that part of his body. I always would say that Oscar Hammerstein directed me with his tummy and, after we wrapped, I gave him a gold disc with the inscription 'To Your Tummy'."

The film's success also got her a slot on The Ed Sullivan Show alongside none other than The Beatles, whom she called "really nice boys". Five years later – after her 17th and final film, the underperforming romantic comedy For Love or Money (1963) – she made the move into TV because "television was much better for women around the mid-Sixties".

But, heeding Gene Kelly's advice to "never do television unless it was an event", she shunned weekly dramas in favour of a series of specials that netted 17 Emmy nominations and seven wins. She went on to tour the UK and Canada, saying, "It was daunting at first but I love it more than anything else and it really has become my home. I love that wonderful contact you have with an audience. They're like your friends and family."

Ever the trooper, she performed her one-woman show Razzle Dazzle: My Life Behind the Sequins well into the 2010s. And just this year when asked what she was most proud of about her career she said, "I'm proudest of the fact I've had the opportunity to entertain audiences for so many years. It's an honour and a privilege to stand in front of an audience, whether it's on stage or on screen. I hope I brought some joy because I love what I do."


In South Pacific Mitzi plays Navy nurse Nellie, who falls in love with local, Emile


Mitzi said the 'motorcycle ballet' in Les Girls is one of her ever favourite numbers

MOMENT IN TIME

June 13, 1981

SHOTS FIRED AT THE QUEEN

A former air cadet from Kent, 17-year-old Marcus Sarjeant, pointed a pistol at Queen Elizabeth II as she rode down The Mall in London for the Trooping the Colour ceremony.

He fired six blank rounds before being apprehended by a soldier and the police. The Queen's 19-year-old horse, Burmese, which she has ridden in birthday parades since 1969, was startled, but, as a skilled rider, Her Majesty was able to regain control quickly. She was unharmed but shaken.

The incident raised security concerns ahead of Prince Charles and Lady Diana's wedding, which was due to take place the following month.

This was not the first time a member of the royal family had been targeted. Seven years earlier, Princess Anne was attacked by a gunman; in 1936, King Edward VIII faced a man with a loaded revolver; and Queen Victoria was also shot at in The Mall.

Sarjeant was found guilty of discharging a blank cartridge pistol at the Queen with intent to alarm her. The court was told that Sarjeant had at one stage planned to kill the Queen, but had failed to obtain a suitable lethal weapon. He was sentenced to five years in prison under the 1842 Treason Act. He served more than three years and was released in 1984.

Did you know?
The Treason Act was previously used in 1966 when John Francis Morgan threw a concrete block at the Queen's car during a royal visit to Belfast.





"I wanted to be famous. I wanted to be a somebody."
Marcus Simon Sarjeant



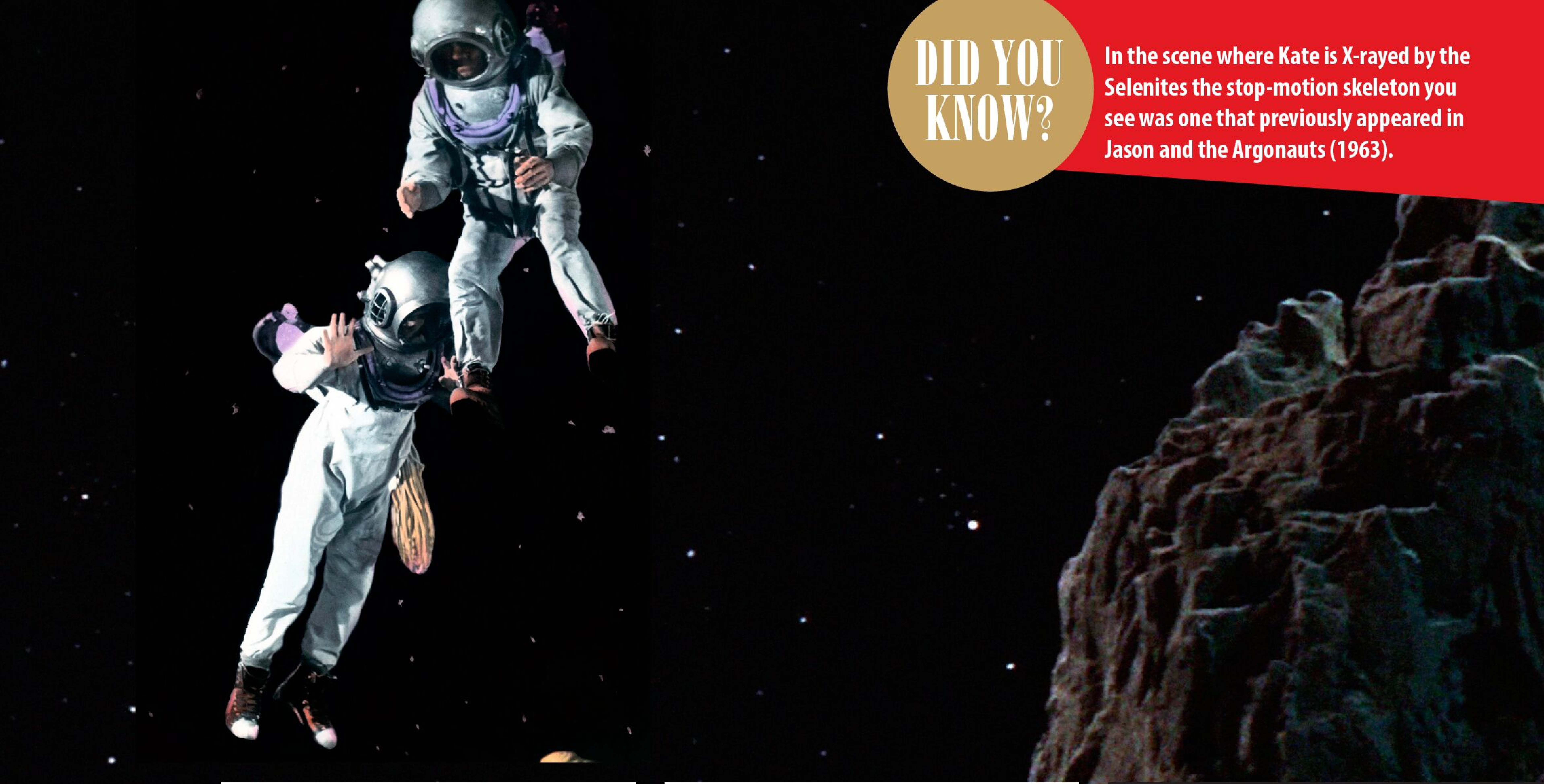


A lunar legacy

Sixty years ago, eccentric inventor Cavor and his cohorts travelled to the moon, as imagined by H.G. Wells. David Reid investigates how Dynamation genius Ray Harryhausen brought the story vividly to life



H.G. Wells' story had been loosely adapted into film twice before: first by Georges Méliès for his whimsical A Trip to the Moon (1902), and then in 1919 by British director Bruce Gordon as The First Men in the Moon



DID YOU KNOW? In the scene where Kate is X-rayed by the Selenites the stop-motion skeleton you see was one that previously appeared in Jason and the Argonauts (1963).

The 1901 science fiction novel, The First Men in the Moon, by H.G. Wells about a Victorian-era expedition to the moon first captured the imagination of Ray Harryhausen as a teenager. By the early Sixties, Ray had suggested many times to his business partner and producer Charles Schneer that they make a film version, but Schneer was sceptical. Ray remembered, “Charles would look at me and bring up the same logical arguments, namely that there was not enough variety in it… and that space exploration had advanced to such a degree that it would be difficult to make the story seem believable to modern audiences.”

However, when Charles happened to mention Ray’s idea to Nigel Kneale, creator of the BBC’s Quatermass series, the acclaimed writer was enthusiastic. Kneale, also a fan of the book, soon came up with a brilliant conceit: a prologue and epilogue structure that would frame the story, effectively solving Schneer’s misgivings by bringing the concept up to date, while preserving the essence of Wells’ fantastic fantasy.

First Men in the Moon (1964) dramatically opens in ‘present day’ 1964 with a United Nations space craft making what the world believes to be the first historic landing on the Moon. But upon embarking on their debut moonwalk, the astronauts are shocked to find a battered Union Jack and handwritten note, dated some 65 years earlier, claiming the moon on behalf of Queen Victoria. Stranger still, the note is written on the back of a court summons for one Katherine Callender of Dymchurch village in England.

TALL TALES

Back on Earth, UN investigators are hastily dispatched to rural England where they discover that, while the lady in question has passed away, her husband, Arnold Bedford, is alive. The team interview the now-elderly Bedford, who is terrified for the safety of the current lunar expedition as he recounts his incredible story…

It’s 1899 and Bedford (Edward Judd) rents a secluded cottage. The businessman is in hiding from his creditors and intends to write a play. Instead, he and his lovely American fiancée Kate (Martha Hyer) encounter Cavor (Lionel Jeffries) a flamboyant, dishevelled fellow who has invented a gravity-defying substance, Cavorite, and intends to demonstrate it by journeying to the moon. Bedford agrees to become Cavor’s travelling companion, while also ➤





Cavor (Lionel Jeffries) claims the moon for Queen and country (*top*). Some of the Selenites were played by children (*above*)



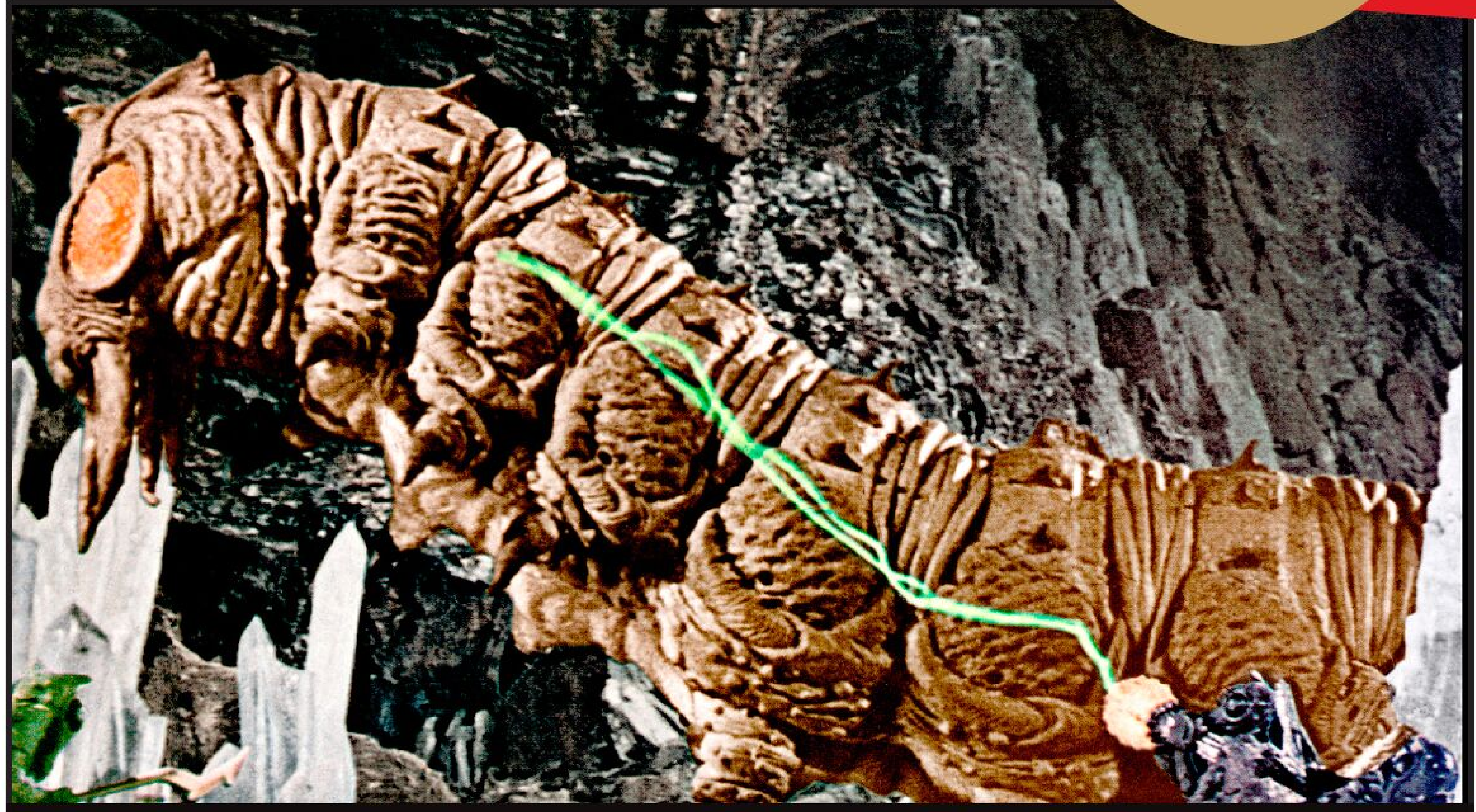
DID YOU KNOW? Martha Hyer, who played Kate, was married to legendary Casablanca producer Hal B. Wallis.

unscrupulously selling the cottage (which he doesn't own) to the inventor and duping Kate into signing the contract.

As the two men prepare to depart the earth in Cavor's Sphere craft, Kate is served a court summons for fraud. The furious fiancée confronts Bedford and finds herself accidentally accompanying them into space

Upon landing, the two men adorn modified diving suits and explore the lunar surface. They discover an incredible underground complex of caverns, leading to a sophisticated subterranean city populated by intelligent insect-like creatures they call Selenites.

A series of amazing adventures follow: the men are chased by a giant 'mooncalf' caterpillar, Kate and the Sphere are captured and examined, and Cavor is interviewed (or perhaps put on trial) by the Grand Lunar, leader of the Selenites. The movie returns to 1964 as Bedford concludes his story and watches emerging TV footage of the modern-day astronauts as they enter what's left of the Selenite city.



When the mooncalf was killed by a group of Selenites using a strange green electrical ray, it was reduced to just a skeleton

TECHNICAL TROUBLE

While Ray was pleased to finally have his idea green-lit, there was technical trouble ahead. Charles felt that it would help the movie's commercial appeal to film in Panavison widescreen format. When Ray objected, citing major complications for his Dynamation sequences (his brilliant technique of 'sandwiching' stop-motion models between pre-filmed back-projected background and front-projected foreground), the producer reminded him of his earlier resistance to using colour film for The 7th Voyage of Sinbad (1958) which had worked out well in the end.

Unfortunately, widescreen turned out to be a bigger problem as Ray soon discovered, "...the lenses created a severe 'fall off' of light and definition on the sides of the rear-projected image... and there was a fluctuating focus and critical hot spot in the centre of the screen, which had to be constantly corrected." He later surmised that with more time and money he might have made it work, but in the event had to redesign the Dynamation sequences as 'travelling mattes' animated on miniature sets.

The mattes themselves were a further issue as Ray's preferred sodium vapour process would not work in Panavision either. He was forced to resort to blue screen, which he admitted worked "fine". The biggest downside was that time lost to production problems meant several key animated concepts had to be abandoned.

As with all his films, Ray's effects sequences were the starting point around which the narrative would be weaved. The official director, Nathan 'Jerry' Juran, worked with an understanding that they were serving Ray's concepts. "The director's job in our films comes in later," Ray explained, "To get the best out of the actors."

Ironically, Schneer's choice of director had little time for motivational conceits and was more popular with Harryhausen than the cast. While Ray praised Juran's professionalism and sense of humour, Edward Judd declaimed, "Lionel and I didn't like Jerry's working methods too much... He was more of a technician than an actor's director."

Regardless, Harryhausen was effusive about Jeffries, saying, "Lionel is one of those rare breed of actors who is not only accomplished in his field but also enjoys what he is doing and has the added bonus of having an imagination. I would show him drawings of the effects scenes and he would know instantly what was required and how it would look, even offering suggestions."

RAY'S LEGACY

While a box office disappointment, First Men in the Moon is a charming and flamboyantly entertaining film. Lionel Jeffries steals the show, but the whole cast are strong and the addition of Kate, a forthright, practical woman not featured in the book, brilliantly complements Cavor's buffoonery and Bedford's reactionary arrogance.

Ray's effects are outstanding. His lunar surface and interior, a mixture of miniatures and full-sized sets, are vividly alien works of art. And while, due to budget constraints, there's some costume work, Ray's animated Selenites are full of eerie, otherworldly life.

Meanwhile, the opening 'modern' moon landing sequence was created by Harryhausen five years before the real-life event. NASA gave Ray access to its blueprints for reference and the results were so good that the space agency used Ray's depiction of a lunar lander module detaching from a mothership – which remains in orbit – and descending towards the moon for illustrative purposes during the landing in 1969.

All in all, an outstanding legacy, and in the words of Cavor, himself, "Absolutely imperial!"

OBJECT of desire

SILVER CROSS PRAM

The transport of choice for generations of royal babies, Silver Cross carriage prams became a much sought-after status symbol for mums everywhere

The world's first patented baby carriage was created in Leeds, Yorkshire, in 1877 by former blacksmith William Wilson. Fascinated by engineering, his plan was to create a unique spring suspension system to help keep baby more comfortable.



A CLASSIC BALMORAL PRAM CURRENTLY RETAILS AT £3,000. IN 1965 A SILVER CROSS WOULD COST £36 7S 6D (EQUIVALENT TO AROUND £700 TODAY).



Silver Cross, which has become known as the Rolls-Royce of the pram world, has been linked with royalty for more than a century. In 1913 a special edition was created and sent to George VI, for Princess Elizabeth and it soon became the official royal pram. All the Queen's children and many of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren have been seen in these traditional carriage prams.

The name Silver Cross comes from the street in Leeds where the factory originally stood.

An export success story, Silver Cross are sold in more than **70 COUNTRIES** worldwide and over **10 MILLION** parents have transported babies with their help.

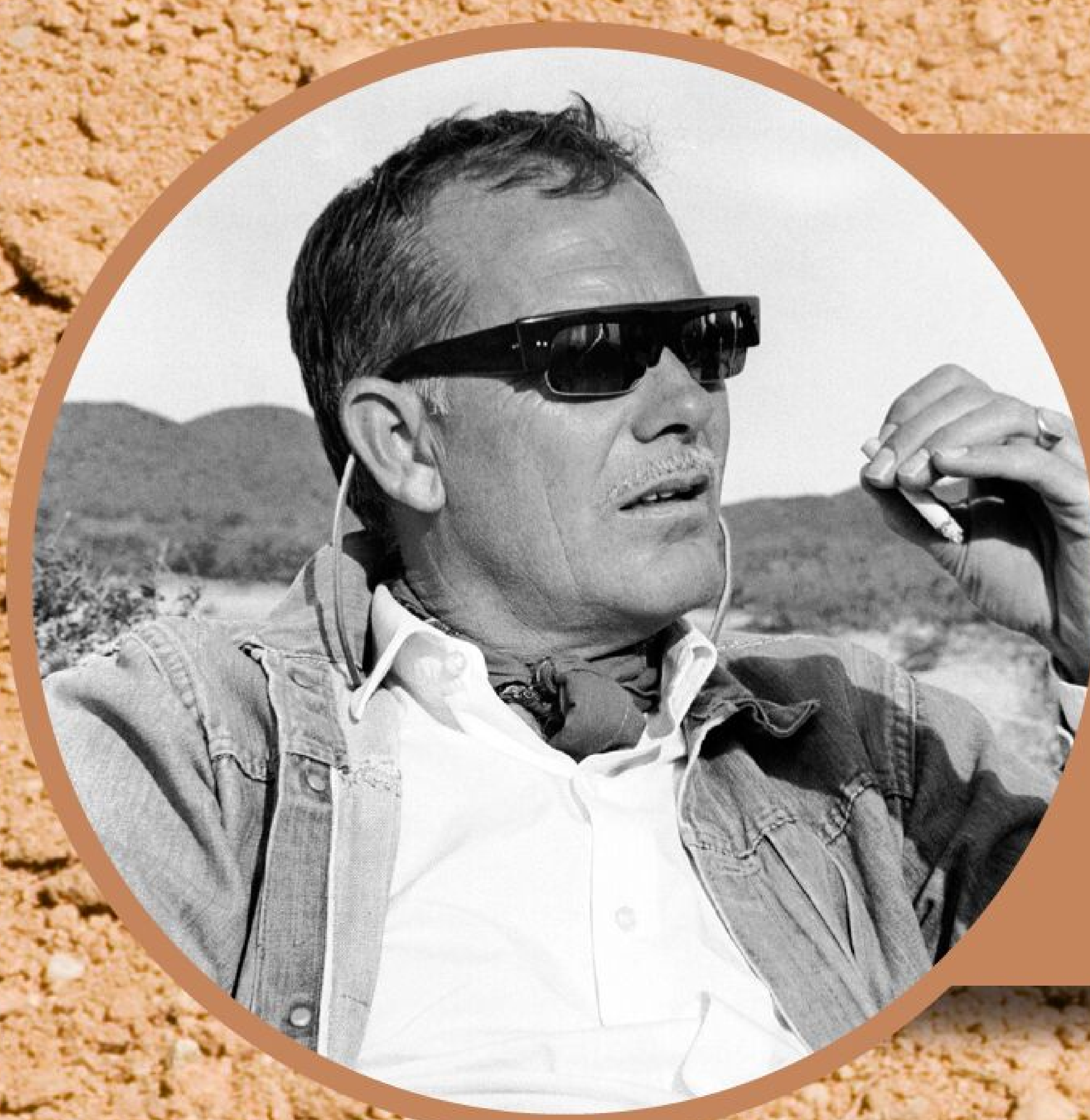




The Sixties was a tricky time for Silver Cross with modern parents rejecting the iconic coach style, but the company pivoted to develop lightweight and adaptable pushchairs.

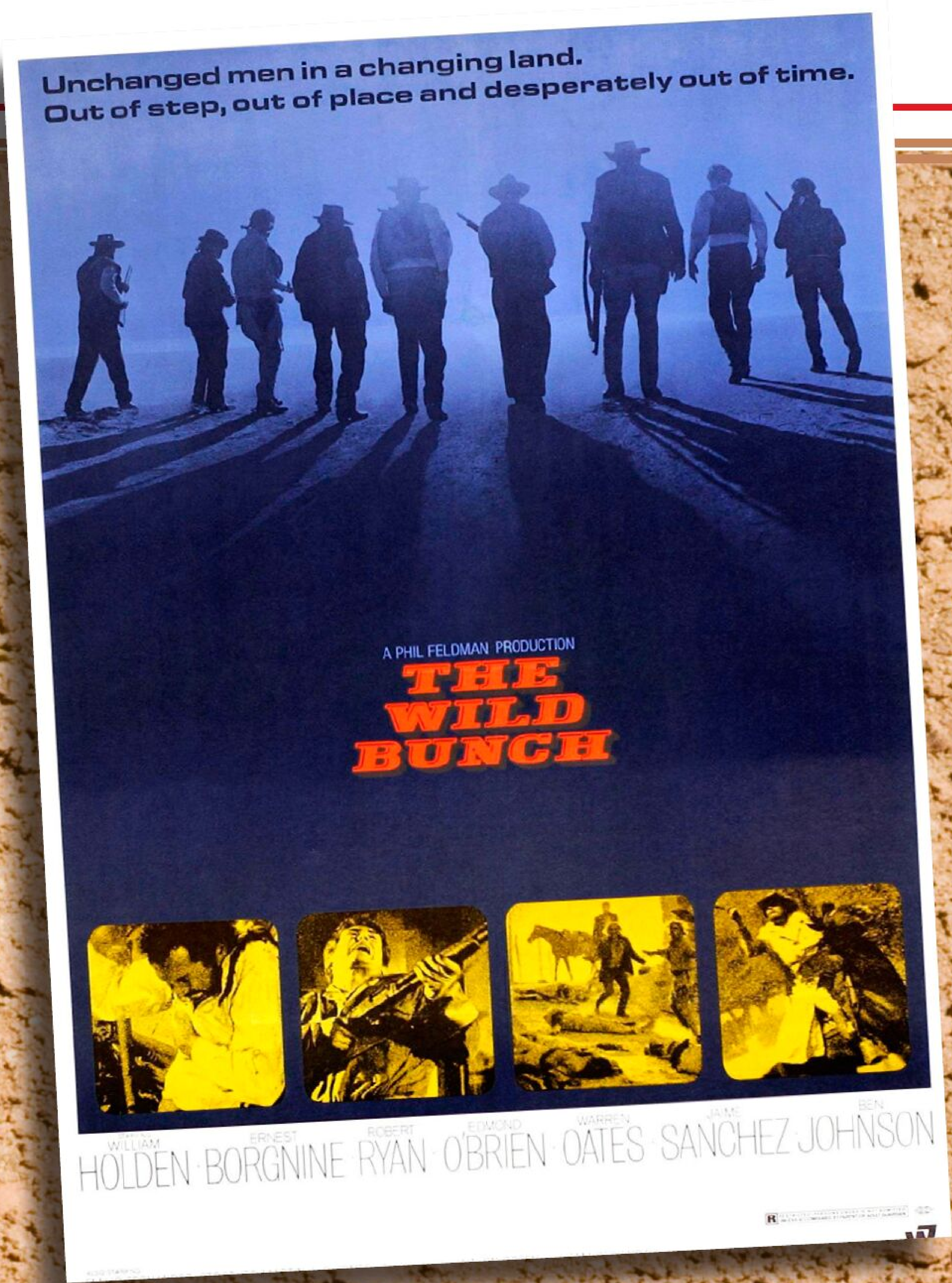


THE LAST



Sam Peckinpah's film The Wild Bunch changed movies forever. Adam Smith examines how, despite a troubled and gruelling production, the director produced his first international hit

WESTERN



When John Wayne first saw Sam Peckinpah's The Wild Bunch on its release in 1969 The Duke was not impressed. "Distasteful," was his damning verdict. "Pictures go too far when they use that kind of realism when they have shots of blood spurting out and teeth flying, and when they throw liver out to make it look like people's insides."

He wasn't alone. Peckinpah's film, violent, romantic, sentimental and, some would say, unbearably nihilist, arrived at the tail end of a bewildering decade like a bloody tornado. Some saw its tale of a gang of ageing outlaws, hard men whose idea of the West was rapidly vanishing over the horizon, as a revisionist masterpiece, a Western movie for a new, confusing age.

For others, it was a betrayal of the genre's hallowed principles, a bullet to the heart of the comforting legends of Hollywood's Old West.

The miracle is that it was made at all. Its director was a functioning alcoholic, whose professional reputation was fading as quickly as his appetite for hellraising was growing. Its stars were, if not over the hill, at least in sight of the twilight of their careers. The studio was nervous, the on-set rows and tempestuous arguments, which occasionally exploded into fisticuffs, threatened to derail the whole thing.

But despite Wayne's dismissive review, The Wild Bunch would emerge not only as one of the greatest films of the New Hollywood era, but one of the greatest Westerns of all time.

This was a Western for the times: America was embroiled in Vietnam, a conflict in which distinguishing the good guys from the bad guys was increasingly difficult. JFK and then Martin Luther King had been brutally assassinated, and the conformist, brilliantined youth of the Fifties had been replaced with long-haired hippies and freaks who smoked dope when they weren't burning the flag.



Ageing outlaws: Ben Johnson as Tector, Warren Oates as Lyle, William Holden as Pike and Ernest Borgnine as Dutch

The old certainties were being blown away. And after Peckinpah's masterpiece, the Western was among the things that could never be the same again.

Sam Peckinpah's reputation – driven, boozy, temperamental, difficult and more than occasionally violent – was already well established. "Inside Sam was a sweet guy," his friend Monte Hellman (director of 1971's Two-Lane Blacktop) once said. "But you had to get through a lot of layers of crap to reach the sweet centre."

But by the time he came to make The Wild Bunch his career was on the slide. Major Dundee (1965), had been a major flop and the shoot had been a debacle. Charlton Heston at one point had threatened to run Peckinpah through with his sabre, and the film was both over schedule and catastrophically over budget.



Disguised as cavalry soldiers, Angel (Jaime Sánchez) Dutch (Ernest Borgnine) and Pike (William Holden) arrive in town

ONE LAST ROBBERY

After its dismal reception he'd been fired after just four days of shooting on The Cincinnati Kid (1965). He'd found refuge in a well-received television play, Noon Wine, but his movie career was on the skids. The Wild Bunch would save it, at least for a while.

The original screenplay had been written by Roy Sickner, a stunt performer and former Malboro Man. "I got a call from Roy, an old drinking buddy of Lee Marvin's," co-screenwriter Walon Green is reported as saying. "Roy had written a treatment that had been given the thumbs-up by Marvin. It wasn't the most demanding project I'd been offered, but since it sounded fun and gave me a chance to work in the movies, I said 'yes'."

Along with Peckinpah, Green took the seeds of Sickner's story and fleshed it out. Their plot, set along the US/Mexico border in 1913, had a group of fading outlaws who stage one last, disastrous, bank job, being pursued across the Mexican border by a former gang member turned bounty hunter, and finally embarking on a suicidal attempt to rescue another of the outfit from the clutches of a Mexican general.

It was a brutal story. Its 'heroes' were low-rent thieves, it featured two spectacularly bloody shoot-outs, once during the robbery and another at the end of the movie, when the gang are gunned down. There were no 'white hats' to ride to the rescue. And it embodied the themes that had fascinated Peckinpah for his entire career: loyalty, violence, honour, and the fading values of the Old West.

But the real spark to The Wild Bunch finally getting made was another, entirely different screenplay that was then doing the rounds of the Hollywood studios. William Goldman's Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969) was the hottest script in town. His modern reimagining of the Western





DID YOU KNOW?

Monty Python spoofed Peckinpah's blood-drenched style in their sketch Salad Days in which a genteel tennis match turns into an unlikely bloodbath. Peckinpah saw and reportedly loved the skit. He later became friends with Graham Chapman.

was already tipped to be a smash hit. Studios were fighting over who would pay the record-breaking $400,000 to buy it.

The Wild Bunch had much of the same contemporary, countercultural vibe as Goldman's tale. It was designed to touch the live wires of the modern world, to push the Western across new frontiers. Warner Bros executive Ken Hyman saw a chance to get in before the competition and greenlit the project.

MARVIN JUMPS SHIP

Peckinpah had settled on Lee Marvin, who had been keen on the project from the start, for the role of Pike, the leader of the outlaws. But Marvin soon began having doubts. The role seemed to him too close to a role he'd played in another Western, The Professionals, in 1966. His exit was sealed when he was offered a record-breaking $1 million to appear in Paint Your Wagon (1969) opposite Clint Eastwood. Marvin bailed, and Peckinpah found himself in need of a new star.

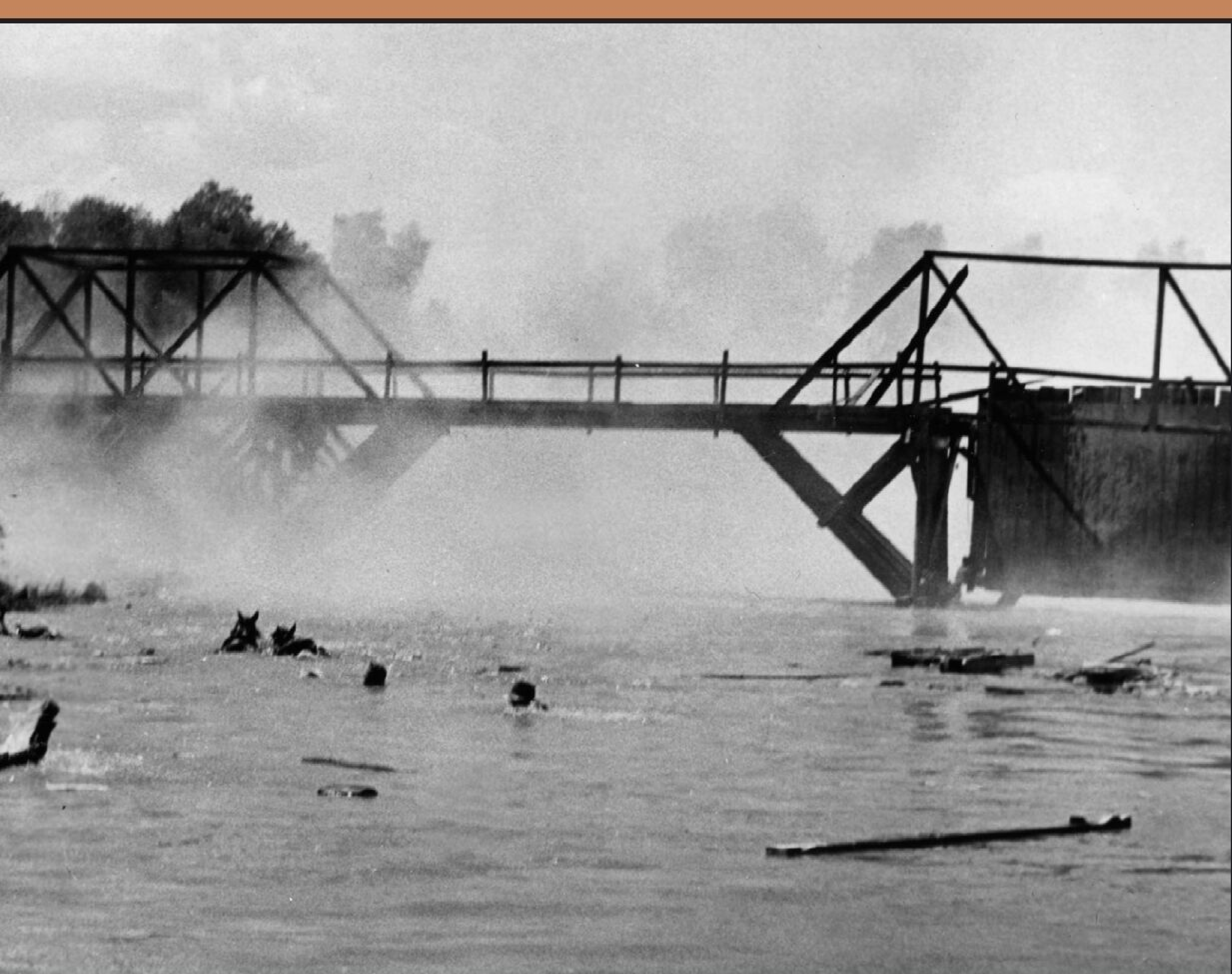
Robert Mitchum was considered, Burt Lancaster, Charlton Heston and Gregory Peck were also in the frame. But the actor Peckinpah settled on was a masterstroke. William Holden had been one of the great actors of the studio age, but by the Sixties was as boozy and troubled as his new director. His career had faded and he had been charged with manslaughter only months before filming began, the result of a car crash in Italy. In a way he embodied the fallen hero in real life, a man out of time, as much as Pike did in the movie.

The director fleshed out the ensemble with reliable, recognisable actors, ones whose involvement in the film would at first reassure audiences, and then shock them. On studio orders, Ernest Borgnine was cast as Dutch, Pike's closest friend. It resulted in one of the greatest performances of Borgnine's career.

Deke, the former gang member turned bounty hunter, would be played by Robert Ryan, an intense, serious actor whose real loyalty lay in the theatre. During shooting he and Peckinpah would repeatedly clash over the actor's billing in the movie. For the role of Angel, the innocent captured by General Mapache, Peckinpah went with a relative unknown Jaime Sánchez while Ben Johnson and Warren Oates, the only real representative ➜



William Holden's comeback role led to parts in hits including The Towering Inferno



Blowing up the bridge

The key scene in which a bridge is blown up, sending horses and riders tumbling into the river below, was one of the most complex, potentially deadly sequences Peckinpah had ever attempted. The crew built a fake bridge mostly of balsa wood. On the director's call of action, a trap door was set to drop the riders and horses into the water below while the bridge, rigged with dynamite, exploded around them.

Stuntman Joe Canutt, a son of the legendary Yakima, was horrified by the amount of dynamite Sam wanted to use. "[There was enough dynamite] to blow us clean onto dry land," he said. "My mother didn't have any stupid children. I told him if he didn't cut those charges they'd have to find someone else. I rode the stunt, but I told Peckinpah that I'd never work for him again."

In the end, the stunt went off almost perfectly. Peckinpah shot it with six cameras, only one of which was lost in the river rapids.

of the new era of Hollywood actors, would play the brothers Tector and Lyle Gorch.

L.Q. Jones, Strother Martin and Emilio Fernández (one of Mexico's most renowned directors and actors who arrived at the set with an entourage of startlingly young women and had a reputation as a man who would pull a real gun during an argument) as Mapache completed the ensemble.

GOING TO WAR

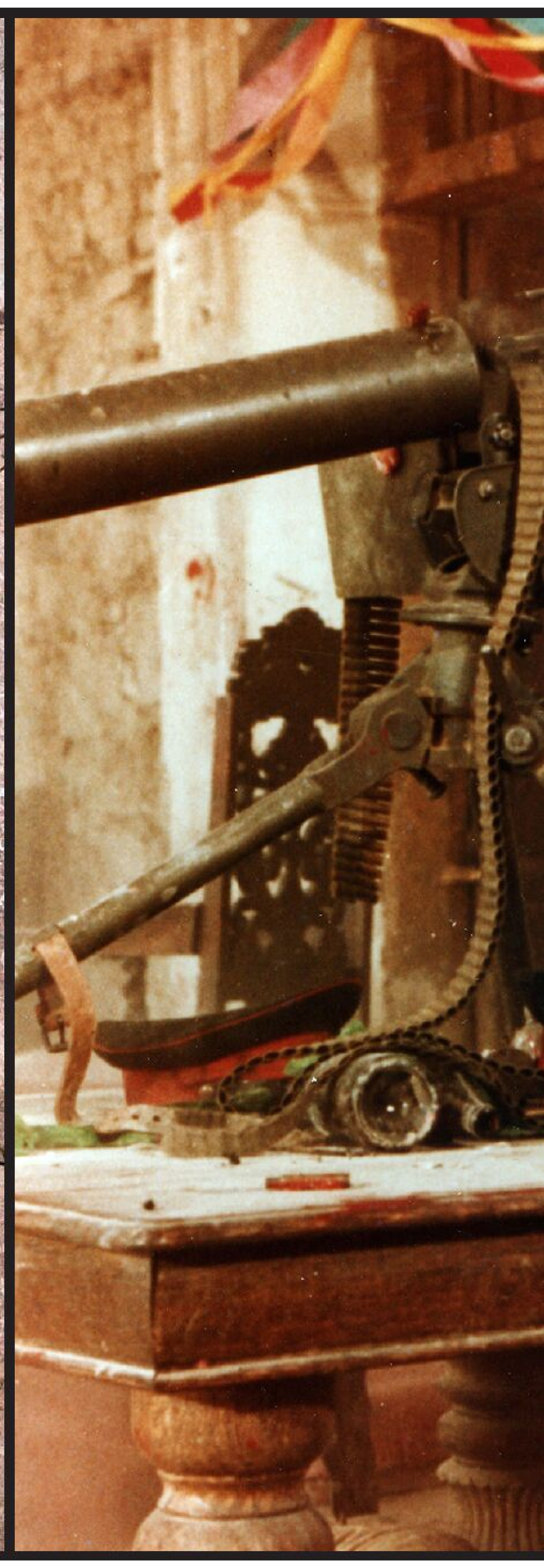
In March 1968, with his cast finally in place, Peckinpah decamped to Mexico. And, like the characters in his screenplay, he brought a fair amount of chaos with him.

"Sam could be hell on wheels. He fired one assistant director 17 times," Ernest Borgnine remembered of the shoot. Peckinpah had always been driven and obsessive, but he seemed to realise that this was a make-or-break movie for him, and he poured everything he had into it.

As had become a regular occurrence in his career Peckinpah constantly argued with the studio over the way the movie was being shot. "Sam did his old trick of going to war with the execs," remembered Holden. "He just loved to piss them off. Like in the scene Angel had his throat slashed. The blood spurted from here to the street. And Sam printed it! It was just a malfunction of the pumping mechanism, but it scared the shit out of everybody who saw the dailies. The producers were speechless."



Ernest Borgnine said Sam Peckinpah was a gentleman and "a hell of a director"



His mood was hardly helped by the fact that his boozing had given him a case of the piles so bad he bled through his white Levi's so acquired the nickname Bloody Sam.

On one occasion he lost his temper over the effect of a bullet hitting a wall. "That's not the effect I want!" he yelled. Grabbing a loaded revolver he fired it at a wall as the effects men cowered. "That's the effect I want!" Sam yelled as bits of plaster flew.

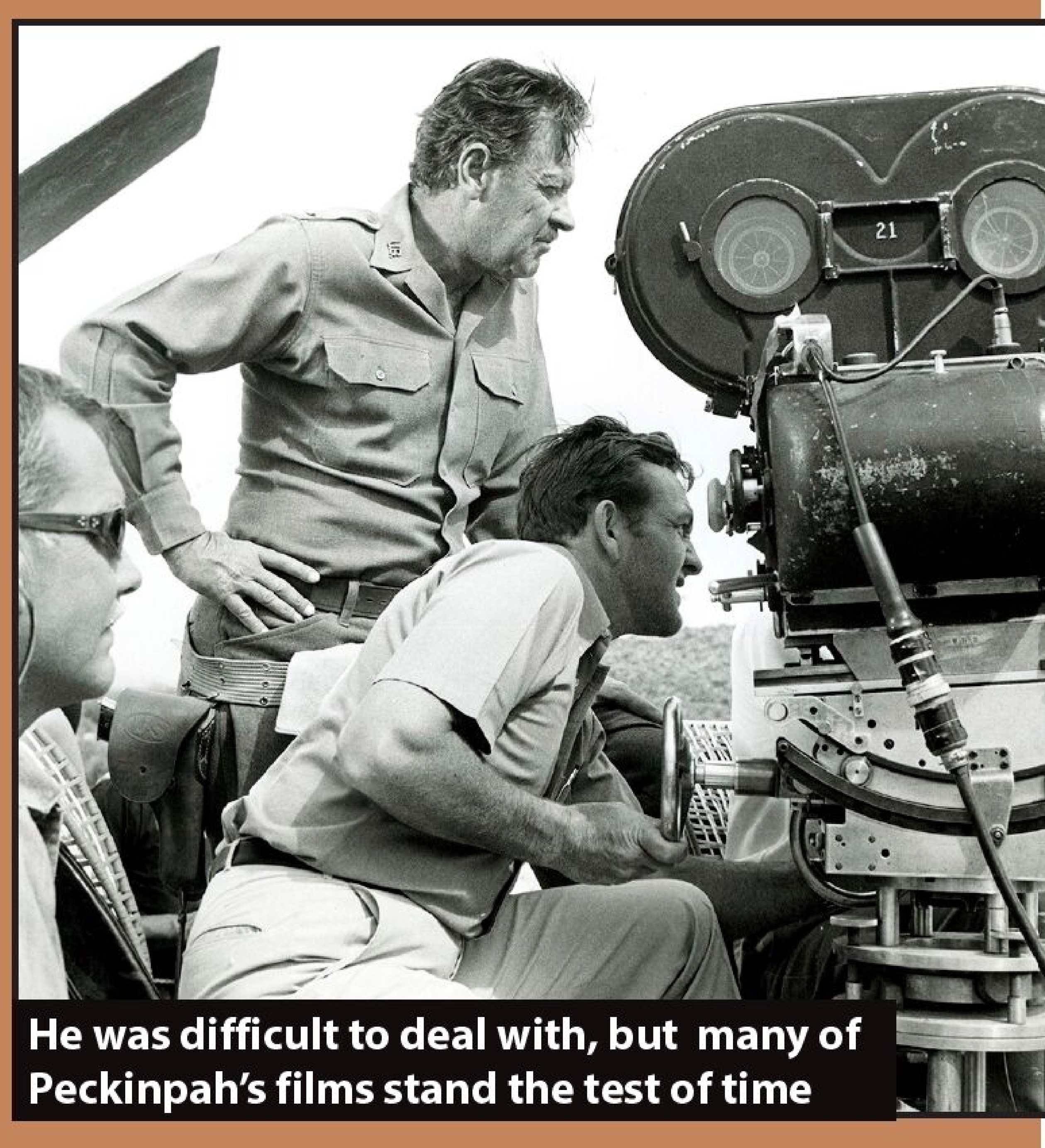
But the most challenging sequence was the final five-minute climactic shoot-out in which the gang make a doomed, suicidal attempt to rescue Angel. Peckinpah

Peckinpah's last years

Sam Peckinpah's career post The Wild Bunch was one of frustrating inconsistency. During the Seventies he produced a string of often flawed but always fascinating films. Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia (1974) was an hallucinatory black comedy/Western that flopped but has emerged as a cult movie. He revisited his themes of the corrosive nature of violence in Straw Dogs (1971) with Dustin Hoffman. Orson Welles, a director whose early promise and subsequent disappointments mirrored Peckinpah's, described Cross of Iron (1977) as the best film about an enlisted man since Lewis Milstone's All Quiet on the Western Front (1930).

But his alcoholism slowly got the better of him and cocaine had also become a problem. By the time he came to direct his last film, Convoy in 1978, he was often so out of it that friend James Coburn was brought in to direct whole scenes.

Towards the end of his life, he finally sobered up, but by then his reputation was in tatters, and Hollywood wasn't interested in the kinds of films he wanted to make anyway. He died, aged 59 of a heart attack in 1984.



He was difficult to deal with, but many of Peckinpah's films stand the test of time



The last stand: A bloody gun battle was a turn-off for some but admired by others

took a full ten days to shoot the scene, rigging the set with tens of thousands of explosive squibs. Ninety thousand blank rounds were fired, more it was rumoured than the number of live rounds fired during the entire Mexican revolution.

Peckinpah used multiple cameras running at different speeds, cutting with incredible rapidity in and out of slow motion. "I wanted to take the facade of movie violence and open it up, get people involved and then twist it so it's not fun any more," he said. "It's just a wave of sickness in the gut. It's a terrible, ugly thing."



Peckinpah's attention to detail was obsessive. "I remember when we were done with the climactic battle," recalled costumer Gordon Dawson, "Sam said, 'Alright, Dawson, change the blood.' And I said, 'What?' He says, 'Make it black.' Because blood blackens as it dries. We had blood running down the walls and on all the bodies. I had to go through and change every ounce to black blood."

A GORY BLOODBATH

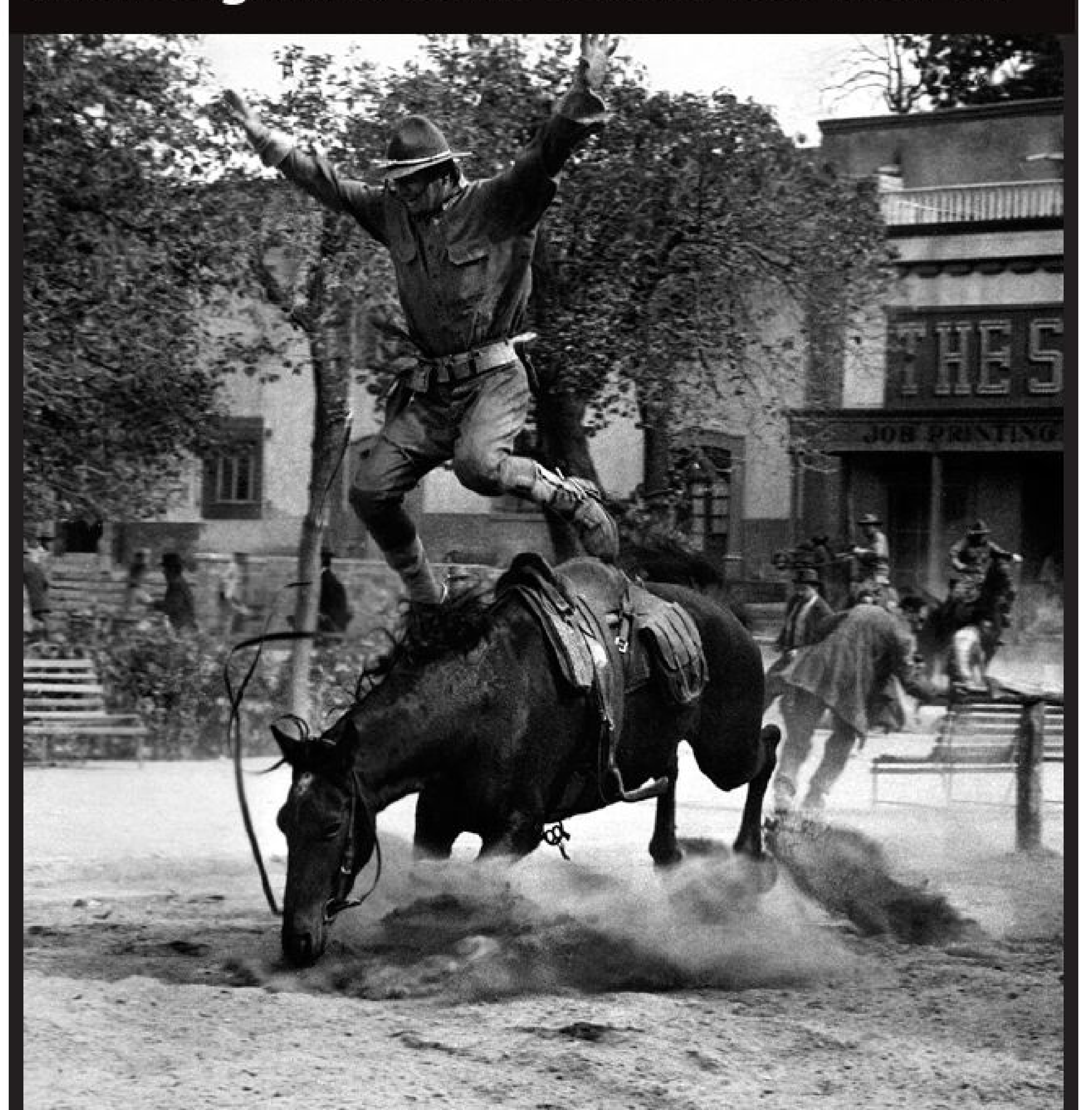
The result was a sequence that to this day seems to bend time, plunging the audience into the ghastly reality of the bloodbath. "The Wild Bunch is not a pretty picture," Peckinpah would later say. "It's the story of violent people in violent times. Violence to the people in the picture is not just a means to an end. It's the end itself."

The Wild Bunch was released on June 18, 1969. The reception was mixed. For some the violence, the pessimism, were too much to bear. During previews in Kansas City, one audience member was so appalled she later wrote to her congressman, others lurched out and were sick in the alley. At another screening a group of nuns, perhaps not the film's target audience, stormed out.

But other critics could see the film was revolutionary. And over the years its reputation has only grown. It changed how we imagine the West forever and, for good or ill, how Hollywood movies depict violence on screen.

"Sam was an obsessive son of a bitch, that's a given," reminisced Ernest Borgnine after Peckinpah's death. "But you look at how great that film was, and at how bad movies are today, and you think that maybe Hollywood would be a better place if there were a few more obsessive sons of bitches directing pictures."

The film's credits list 30 stunt men including brothers Joe and Tap Canutt and Borgnine's stunt double Bob Herron



TOP 5 BOX OFFICE GOLD...

PAUL NEWMAN FILMS



1 The Sting (1973) $937.7m



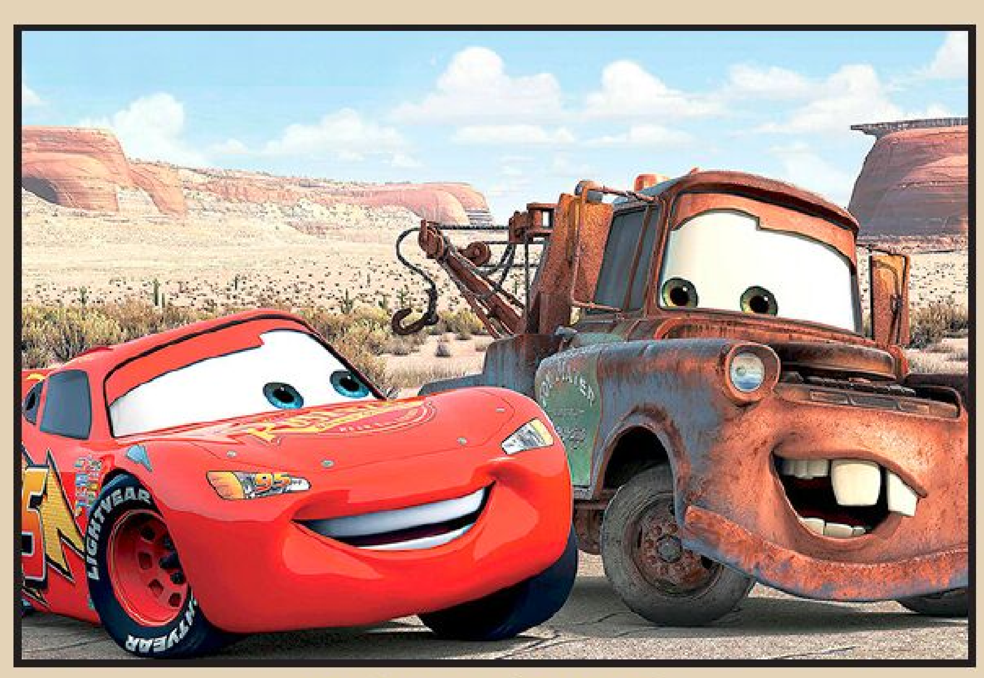
2 Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969) $724.4m



3 The Towering Inferno (1974) $646.7m



4 Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958) $440.5m



5 Cars (2006) $390.6m

** Adjusted domestic box office gross using current movie ticket price (in millions) according to ultimatemovierankings.com*

CROSSR
Soap's lastin





Roger Tonge had Hodgkins lymphoma and his mobility issues led to the storyline that Sandy had to use a wheelchair

Jeremy Colman shines a light on how a 1974 Crossroads storyline inspired a carers' charity that supports nearly a million people across the UK today

In the archives of British television history, few soap operas have created an emotional memory as significantly as Crossroads. Launched in 1964, it became a staple in many homes, producing stories that resonated with the everyday lives of its viewers. But perhaps its most enduring legacy emerged not from the dramatic twists at the Kings Oak motel, but from a storyline that inspired real-world change. In 1974, Crossroads did something unprecedented; it spun a plot that led to the creation of a charity – Crossroads Care. This year, as the organisation marks its 50th anniversary, we look back at the impact and evolution of a storyline that turned into a lifeline for thousands.

Television in the Seventies was one dominated by a few channels, and shows like Crossroads could command attention not just as sources of entertainment, but as catalysts for conversation and, as

OADS g legacy

DID YOU KNOW?

The motel owed its existence to a compulsory purchase order. Meg Richardson received compensation when some of her land was used to build a new motorway in Kings Oak. She used this compensation to convert her Georgian home into the Crossroads Motel, with 16 chalets for tourists and business clients.



Meg, Adam, Jill, Sandy, and Benny the handyman played by Paul Henry

it turned out, for action. Within the walls of the fictional motel, a storyline unfolded. The motel's matriarch, Meg Richardson, played by the indomitable Noele Gordon, had a son, Sandy, who was played by Roger Tonge.

He had been a regular in the show since 1964 and one of Crossroads' storylines saw him become wheelchair-bound after a serious car accident. Meg was thrown into being his primary carer. She was due to take a month's holiday and faced the dilemma of who would care for Sandy while she was away. She created the fictional support group, Caring for Carers, and the storyline struck a chord.

CARING FOR CARERS

It wasn't long before viewers started calling in. One such viewer, Noel Crane, was a local man from Rugby who was being cared for by his mother. He had become a quadriplegic following a diving accident in 1970 and, after seeing the series, he wrote in complimenting the programme makers, ATV, for their portrayal of a person living with a disability.

Many viewers wanted information about the support group launched by Meg in the show. The only issue? The support service didn't actually exist.

Recognising an urgent need, Crossroads set up a charitable organisation to fill the gap in care provision highlighted by its own storyline. ATV invested £10,000 (£130,600 in today's money) for a pilot scheme for 28 families, including Noel and his family in Rugby and Crossroads, Caring for Carers was born. A successful charity emerged from the show with the purpose of delivering respite care services and support for unpaid carers across the nation.

The whole Crossroads team, both in front of and behind the camera took their roles seriously. Being invited into our homes four or five times a week was a privilege that everyone understood and valued. The innovative and practical approach taken to build a support network for unpaid carers was a source of great pride to the team. Noele Gordon and Roger Tonge were visible supporters along with Tony Adams and Jane Rossington, who played husband and wife duo Adam and Jill Chance in the show. They have all been enthusiastic supporters of the charity as have many other cast and crew members.

Fast-forward 50 years to today, and what started as a television-inspired initiative has grown into one of the UK's leading providers of support for carers and the people they care for. Spanning decades of work, Crossroads Care has evolved, but at its core, it remains devoted to alleviating the pressures faced by unpaid carers.

LONG-LASTING LEGACY

The organisation's vital importance was highlighted even more during the pandemic, where the need for carer support was brought sharply into focus. Crossroads Care's services became a beacon of hope and relief to many who were isolated or struggling to balance the weight of their caring responsibilities.

The charity is now a network of more than 120 local, independent charities, many still carrying the Crossroads name. It remains focused on supporting the invaluable contribution that almost one million unpaid carers make to society. The cast of Crossroads would be rightly proud and it's true to say that its mission is as relevant today as it was half a century ago.

For a television show to give rise to such an impactful legacy is rare. The original Crossroads ended its run in 1988, but the charity it inspired continues to create stories of hope, support and community.

Some readers may well be carers, and some may even be supported by the Crossroads charity today. Let's celebrate a show that did more than entertain; it really made a difference, both on and off the screen.

Surviving SYBIL



Nick Smurthwaite discovers that there's so much more to Prunella Scales than her infamous role as Basil Fawlty's harridan wife

Even though it only took up a few months of her long and illustrious acting career, the role for which Prunella Scales will be forever remembered is the waspish, ball-breaking wife of hotelier Basil Fawlty – the terrifying Sybil – in the timeless Fawlty Towers. This is partly because it has been repeated so often since it was first broadcast in the mid-Seventies, and partly because Scales is so brilliant in the role.

Taking that old sitcom cliché of the nagging wife to a new level, Sybil didn't so much nag the hapless Basil as terrorise him, reducing him to a gibbering wreck of self-flagellation with an unassailable combination of logic, righteousness and humiliation. The fact that the petite Scales was a foot shorter than John Cleese made the process all the more hilarious.

All that was left to Basil was to dream up ever more abusive epithets for his wife, usually muttered out of her hearing. These included "my toxic midget"; "you stupid great tart"; "my little piranha fish", and "you rancorous, coiffured old sow".

TV FAVOURITE

Scales – known to friends and family as Pru – had of course been a firm TV favourite for more than two decades before Fawlty Towers came along, ever since Marriage Lines, in which she and Richard Briers played a young married couple adjusting to each other's idiosyncrasies. There were five series aired from 1963 to 1966. Scales and Briers were in their 30s by the time they did Marriage Lines (they looked younger) and they'd both been acting on stage and screen for years. Scales even had a featured role in the 1954 comedy classic, Hobson's Choice, as the youngest daughter of Charles Laughton's drunken cobbler.

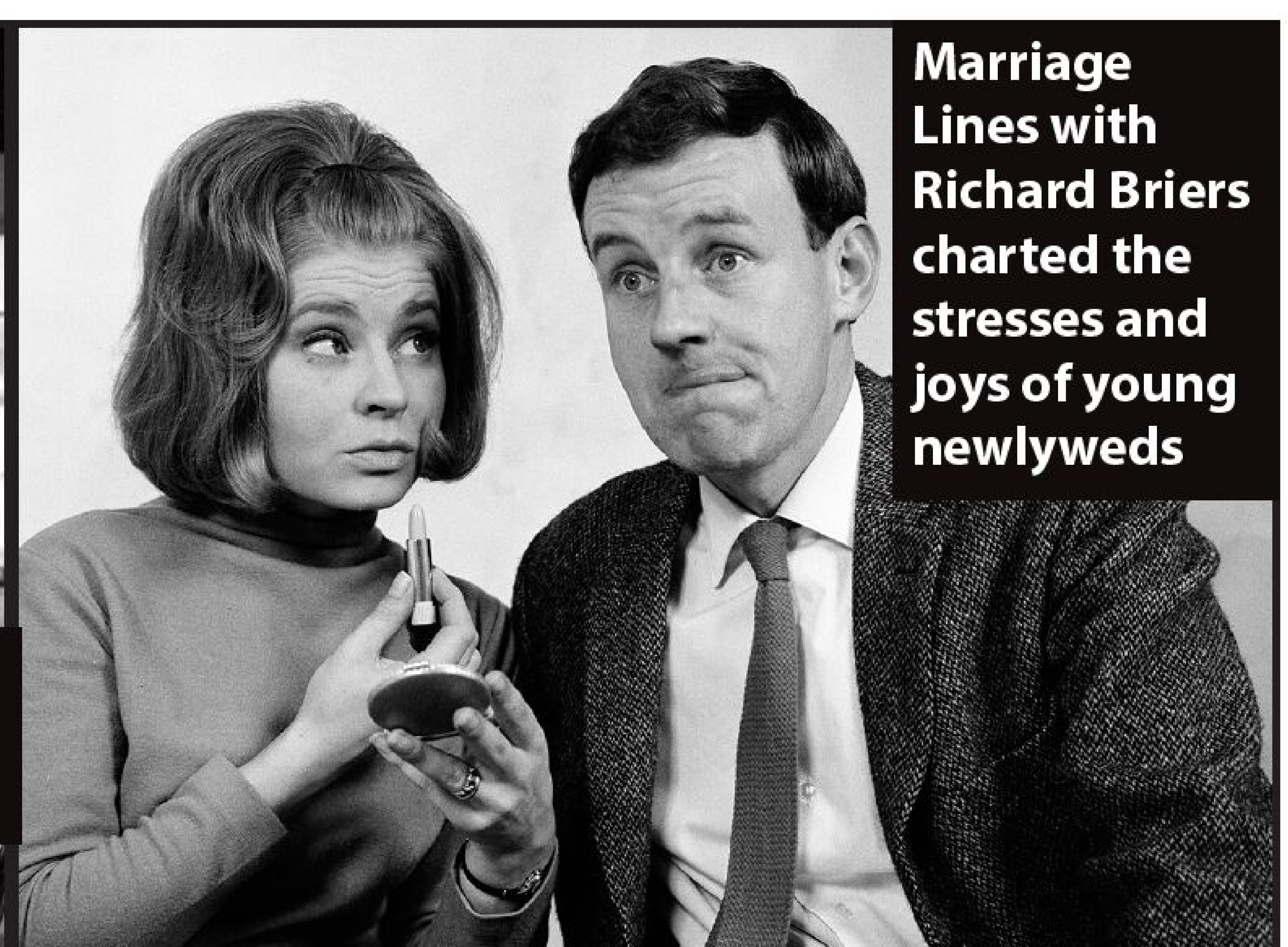
Looking back at her childhood, it is quite surprising to find Scales made the grade as an actor at all. Aged eight, while evacuated to Huddersfield during the war, the sickly child contracted double pneumonia, so her family moved lock, stock and barrel to the warmer climate of Devon. Though academically bright, she set her sights on the stage and won a scholarship to the Bristol Old Vic acting school, where she recalled being labelled "an intellectual" and was viewed with suspicion.

By the early Fifties she was appearing in West End plays and making her TV debut as Lydia Bennett in Pride and Prejudice (1952), in which her future father-in-law, Lockwood 'Harry' West, played the Rev Collins. She also found time to appear in a small role in The Matchmaker on Broadway, and to play a season at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

She and Timothy West – one of the UK's most enduring showbiz couples – met during a 1961 BBC drama, She Died Young, and went on to have two sons,



Pru with acting legends Charles Laughton and John Mills in classic comedy Hobson's Choice



Marriage Lines with Richard Briers charted the stresses and joys of young newlyweds



DID YOU KNOW? Prunella Scales and Timothy West have lived in the same house in Wandsworth for nearly all of their 60-year married life.

Sybil was made memorable by her big hair, high heels and tight skirts with a bray of a laugh acidly described by Basil as sounding like "someone machine-gunning a seal"



one a teacher named Joe, who lives in France, and the other the well-known actor and director, Samuel West. The fifth member of the West clan is her step-daughter Juliet, a novelist, from West's first marriage to Jacqueline Boyer.

STAGE SUCCESS

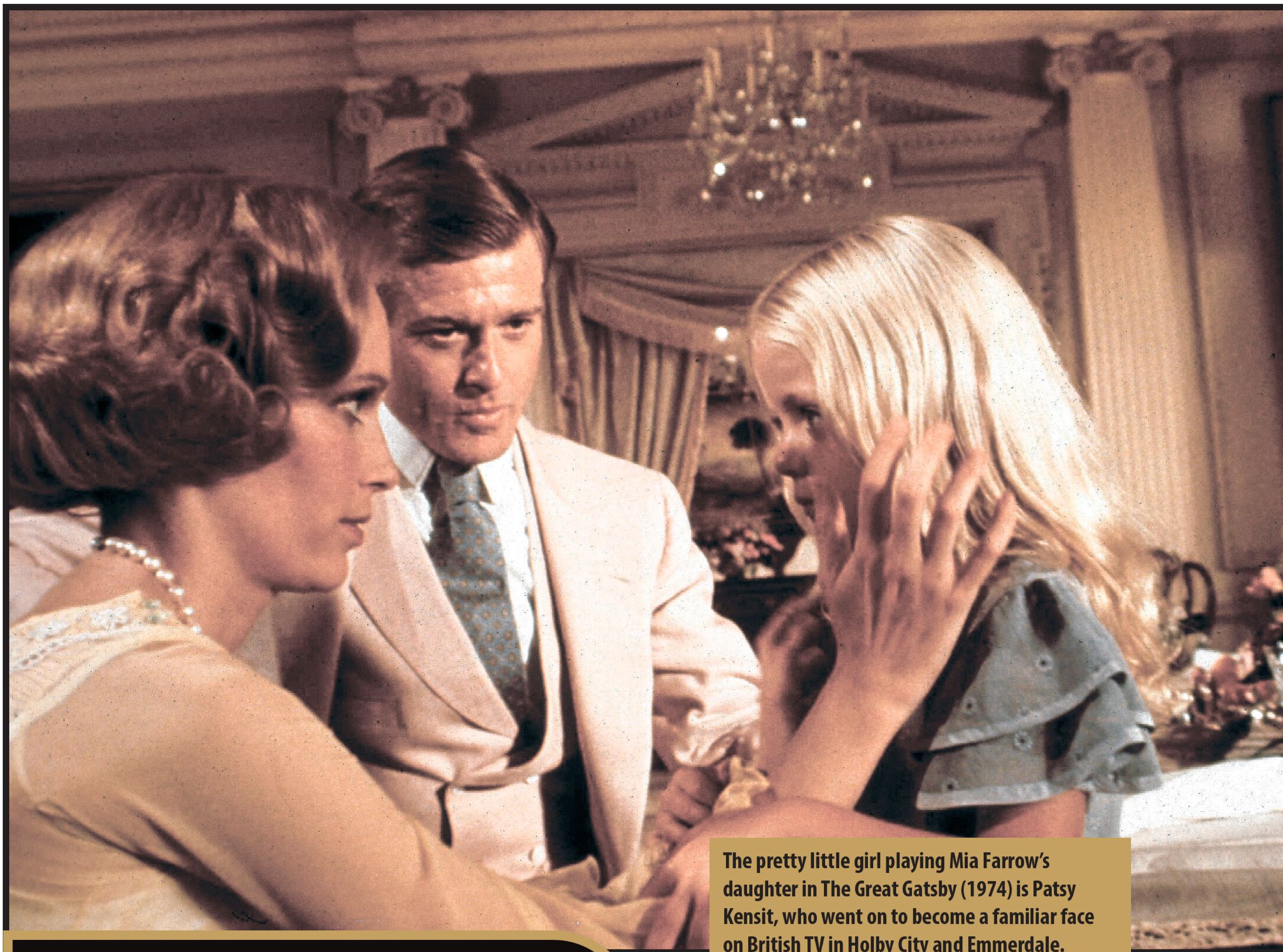
Both Scales and West shared a ferocious work ethic, being rarely out of work by choice in the course of their 60-year marriage. In the early Seventies they toured extensively with the Prospect Theatre Company, of which West was a director. They also played husband and wife in J.B. Priestley's comedy When We Are Married, and in Eugene O'Neill's drama, Long Day's Journey into Night.

One of her biggest stage successes without West was a double bill of Alan Bennett plays at the National Theatre, Single Spies and A Question of Attribution, in which she played two formidable real-life women – the actress Coral Browne and Queen Elizabeth II. She repeated her acclaimed performance as the Queen in animated conversation with Sir Anthony Blunt, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, played by James Fox, for TV in 1991.

According to Alan Bennett, when Scales attended Buckingham Palace to collect her CBE shortly afterwards, the Queen whispered to her, "I suppose you think you ought to be doing this," suggesting that she had seen Scales in the TV version.

Two other TV series in the Eighties consolidated Scales' popularity. The first was as the 40-something widow, living with her teenage daughter and domineering mother in After Henry (1988-92), the second Mapp & Lucia (1985-86), based on the novels of E.F. Benson, in which she and Geraldine McEwan jostled for social position in a small rural community in the Twenties.

For the past ten years or so Scales has been living with dementia, making it impossible for her to manage any acting roles. However, thanks to West's passion for canal boats, the couple were able to undertake Great Canal Journeys for Channel 4, which took them as far afield as India and Egypt. What made the programmes so compelling wasn't so much the canal journeys themselves as the sight of a devoted couple dealing with the greatest challenge of their lives, with good humour, stoicism and tenderness.



The pretty little girl playing Mia Farrow's daughter in The Great Gatsby (1974) is Patsy Kensit, who went on to become a familiar face on British TV in Holby City and Emmerdale.

Before they were famous

They may be a bit tricky to recognise but these actors and actresses showed star quality from an early age

Anthony Newley already had several years of stage and screen acting experience when he starred as the Artful Dodger in Oliver Twist (1948). He went on to find even greater success as a singer and songwriter whose songs became signature hits for Shirley Bassey, Sammy Davis Jr. and Tony Bennett.





By the age of nine Petula Clark had already sung on more than 200 radio shows, entertaining the troops during the Second World War. She starred as Pet in a trio of Huggetts films (1948-49) but really shot to fame with the release of her hit single Downtown in 1964.





Peter Firth rose to become the head of MI5 in Spooks (2002-11) – a meteoric rise for someone who'd once been one of the Double Deckers (back row, centre)!



From this early performance in ITV police drama The Bill, Keira Knightley went on to play a Jane Austen heroine, Russian nobility and a pirate captain.



This cheeky young scamp learnt some new tricks working as a minder…! Dennis Waterman began his career aged 12 in Night Train to Inverness (1960).



Now an Oscar-winning director, Ron Howard has created some of Hollywood's most memorable films, but before all that he was a child star in The Andy Griffith Show (1960-68).



This little lad grew up to say "I'm Batman!" but one of Christian Bale's earliest roles was in Steven Spielberg's war film, Empire of the Sun (1987).



Roddy McDowall became renowned for playing a highly evolved chimpanzee in the Planet of the Apes franchise, but his career spanned more than 150 films beginning in 1938 at the age of 10.

Do you recognise Peter Pan's Lost Boy on the far right of this picture? Nicholas Lyndhurst had already been acting for eight years when he landed the role of Rodney Trotter in Only Fools and Horses (1981-2003).



Comedy historian Robert Ross pays tribute to some of the finest and funniest, but often overlooked, names in showbiz

Forgotten Heroes of Comedy



Some faces are so familiar that they seem to pop up in almost every British film or situation comedy, invariably playing a variation on a theme of a role and, as often as not, stealing the scene from under the nose of the star. However, few would know their name.

One such case is Joan Benham who, for more than 30 post-war years, was the go-to actress for the slender, elegant, slightly frosty upper-class woman or dithering, dotty, slightly inebriated dowager. Usually sporting a natty, flamboyant hat and a pearl necklace.

The plum in the voice was real, for Joan Olive Benham was born in the swankiest part of Fulham, in London, in the spring of 1918, just at the final, staggering conclusion of the First World War. It was as the storm clouds of the Second World War were gathering that she began her acting career, at the age of 20.

Crowd artiste work in British film – including the lavish London Films comedy The Divorce of Lady X (1938) starring Laurence Olivier and, yes, featuring Joan sporting a pearl necklace! – led to several West End theatre productions, from the early Forties. Her comedy film appearances throughout the Fifties included Mother Riley Meets the Vampire (1952), starring Arthur Lucan and Bela Lugosi, and Dry Rot (1956) with Ronald Shiner and Sid James. She was back with Sid, as Una O'Toole, a member of a wartime concert party, forever in need of a public convenience, in Desert Mice (1959). Twenty years later she brought her genial refinement and expressive facial reactions to Carry On Emmannuelle (1978). In between she had worked with such glorious eccentrics as Margaret Rutherford – playing naval Matron, Alice Fanbraid, in the Miss Marple romp Murder Ahoy! (1964) and Peter Sellers as a prim and proper socialite discussing the millionaires' dream ship, The Magic Christian (1969), at an auction of Fine Art at Sotheby's. So Joan Benham!

Still, it was television in which she made her mark. She was at her very best as the delightfully pompous Lady Prudence Fairfax in Upstairs, Downstairs (1971-75), and the cheerfully stoic Elizabeth Loftus, later Lady Loftus, in the London Weekend Television sitcom Doctor in the House (1969-70), and its comically medical and medically comic sequels Doctor in Charge (1972-73), and Doctor on the Go (1975-77). Married to Professor Geoffrey Loftus, as played by Ernest Clark, Joan was required to do little but look painfully embarrassed at her husband's social climbing, but she did it brilliantly, across just eight episodes.

That look of superior disdain served Joan well over the years: supporting such comedians as Ronnie Barker, Tony Hancock, and Terry Scott. Sophisticatedly silly until the end, she died in the heart of London's Westminster, in June 1981. She was 63.

Visit the website of Robert Ross, Britain's Comedy Historian, at robertross.co.uk.

The show must go on

From car crashes to broken ribs, one thing is for sure, Hollywood won't let real-life accidents or injuries get in the way of a good story says Jake Gwilliam



Burt Lancaster excelled at train stunts, but a round of golf put him in hospital

The phrase may have originated with 19th Century circus performers but the principle of 'The show must go on' is still very much alive in showbusiness today. With so much money at stake it's not always viable to stop in the middle of shooting if an actor gets injured. And sometimes directors have to take a creative approach to working around those injuries.

While filming Second World War action-thriller The Train (1964), Burt Lancaster did his own stunts. Director John Frankenheimer said, "Burt of course was in his element falling from trains, sliding


Even after his accident, Burt Lancaster carried on, albeit with a limp

down ladders, climbing walls." Despite playing the action hero it was during a round of golf that Lancaster injured himself. Taking some much-needed respite, halfway through production, Lancaster trod in a hole while playing and aggravated an old knee injury.

Postponing surgery to finish the film, Lancaster continued to do his own stunts. With much of the film relying on his physicality, there were few ways that he could hide his visible limp. Undeterred, Frankenheimer changed the script to have Lancaster's character, Paul Labiche, take a shot to the leg, thus explaining why Labiche developed a limp midway through the film.

Another war film Das Boot (1981) depicts U-boat warfare and the dichotomy of high-intensity combat and long bouts of tedium experienced by the submariners. One scene sees the German sailors navigate a storm and, at one point, the water and high wind sweep Jan Fedder's Petty Officer Maat Pilgrim off the conning tower.

Seeing this Bernd Tauber, playing Kriechbaum, the submarine's navigator, shouted "Man overboard!". Tauber managed to reach the floundering Fedder and get him to the closest hatch. The director, Wolfgang Petersen, thought that it was a wonderfully improvised scene and loved it. He called for a second take before realising that Fedder had broken several ribs. Fedder was hospitalised. To adapt, the script was altered to include Fedder's accident and new scenes were added showing his character recovering from his fall.

George Lucas took a calculated risk hiring unknowns for his new film Star Wars (1977). Before it entered the cultural zeitgeist, the film and its director had little pedigree, so budgets were tight.

Mark Hamill was cast in the now infamous role of Luke Skywalker farmhand turned space-faring Jedi Knight. With only a small number of scenes left to shoot, filming had almost wrapped on the movie that would spawn a multi-billion-dollar franchise, when disaster struck. As Hamill was driving one night he lost control of his car and crashed off the freeway. He found himself









Mark Hamill said he was driving too fast when he had his accident and feared his career was over



The one where Joey jumps off the bed: Matt LeBlanc's injury was written into the script of Friends

in hospital with fractures along his nose and cheek which had changed the way he looked. George Lucas, who was about to start filming the space saga's next instalment, was faced with the real possibility of having to recast the lead actor.

Though denied by Lucas but confirmed by Carrie Fisher (Princess Leia herself), it's said that the Wampa scene in the first act of The Empire Strikes Back (1980) was added to make sense of Hamill's injury. Now iconic, the scene sees Luke captured by the yeti-like Wampa and hung by his ankles in an ice cave. A moment of tension as the beast looms over Skywalker before being thwarted as Luke calls upon The Force to pull his lightsaber from a snowbank nearby.

Once rescued, Luke is seen recuperating with scars now running along the character's face, matching the injury that Hamill himself obtained.

STUNT MISHAPS

We all know that movie sets can be dangerous places and stunts don't always go according to plan but, even seemingly innocuous ones can become perilous.

Take Matt LeBlanc as Joey Tribbiani in Friends (1994-2004). You would be forgiven for thinking that, as sets go, Friends must rank

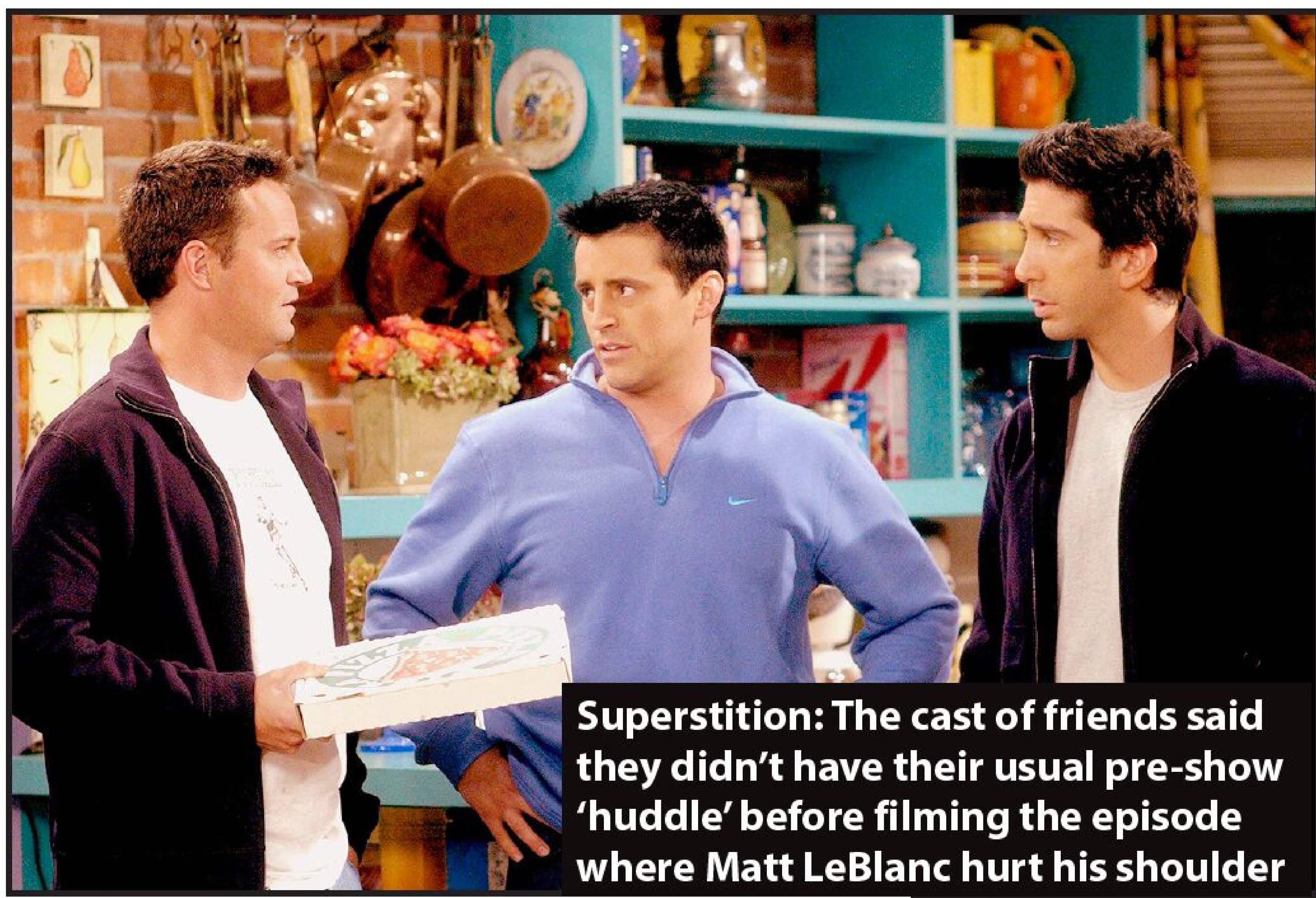


Choppy waters: Jan Fedder broke a few ribs in Wolfgang Petersen's Das Boat

DID YOU KNOW?

Lionel Barrymore's deteriorating health meant that when he was cast in You Can't Take it with You (1938) as Grandpa Vanderhof, the script was changed, explaining the character's physical infirmity by saying Vanderhof had injured himself sliding down a bannister with his granddaughter.





Superstition: The cast of friends said they didn't have their usual pre-show 'huddle' before filming the episode where Matt LeBlanc hurt his shoulder



The take showing Leonardo DiCaprio's bloody hand is real in Django Unchained



on the safer side of things – no guns, explosions or daring chases. Injuring yourself at home is not uncommon and the Friends New York apartment is no exception. The episode titled The One Where No One's Ready, sees Ross frantically trying to get everyone ready for a black-tie charity event at the museum while Joey and Chandler argue over a seat.

Unable to agree, the pair's comedic competition gets out of hand. Joey launches himself over the furniture as they both race to the chair. LeBlanc recalled, "I don't even think it qualifies as a stunt", but he ended up falling and dislocating his shoulder as he put his arm out to catch himself.

CARRY ON REGARDLESS

Stopping production of a weekly show like Friends until LeBlanc recovered would have been impossible. The solution? Scriptwriters included a line in the next episode, The One With the Jam, that explains that Joey has his arm in a sling because he fell off the bed while jumping on it.

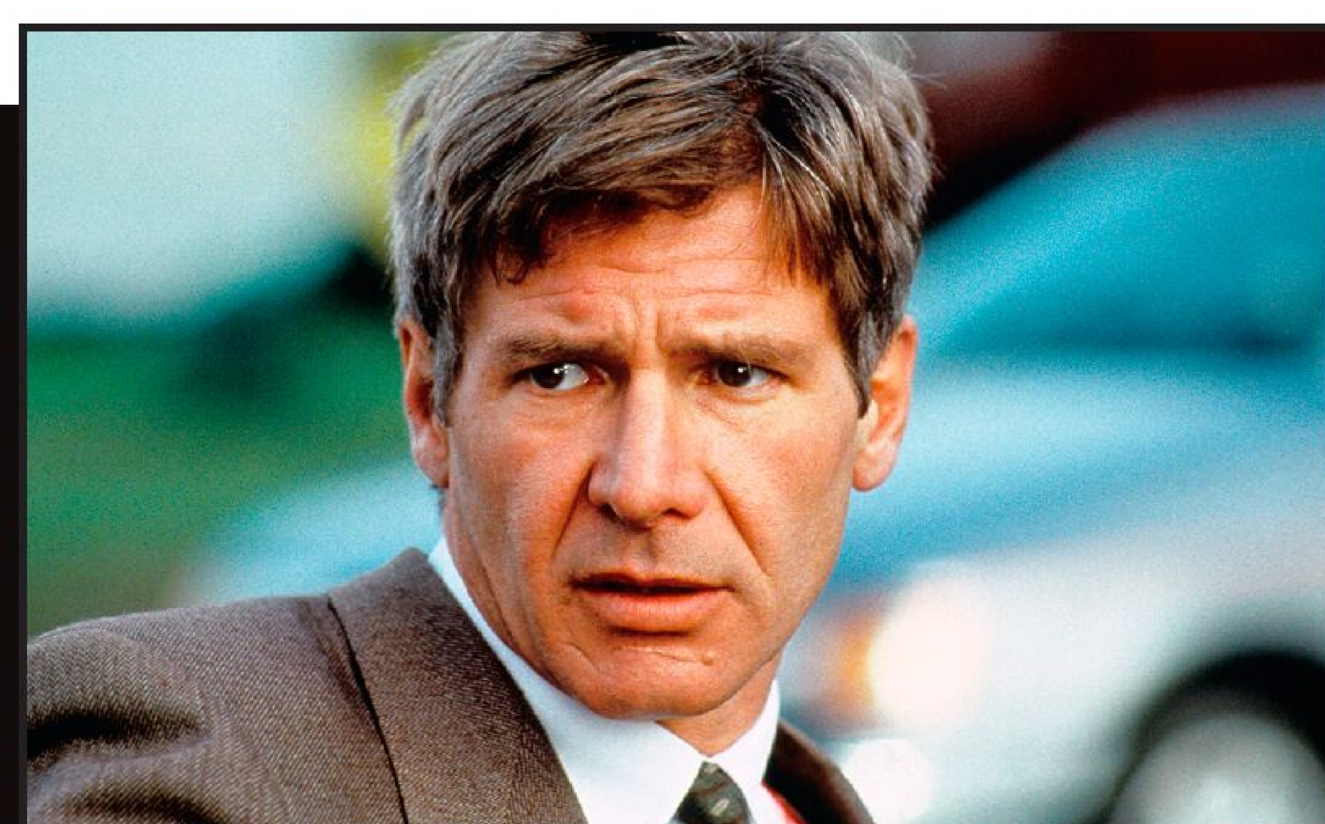
Director Quentin Tarantino is renowned for the violence in his movies but Django Unchained (2012) has a particularly bloody scene that wasn't scripted. Inspired by spaghetti Westerns of the Sixties and Seventies, the film sees Jamie Foxx's Django train under bounty hunter Dr King Shultz (Christoph Waltz) with the ultimate goal of reuniting with his wife, who is being kept as a slave by the despicable Calvin J. Candie (Leonardo DiCaprio). When Candie foils their plot, he has them surrounded. In his rage at being lied to, he pounds his hand down on the table. During one take, however, DiCaprio misjudged his position and slammed his hand into a glass, slicing it open.

Not wishing to break character DiCaprio finished the scene, continuing Candie's monologue apparently undeterred by his hand pouring with blood. The other actors could only look on aghast, "That was the fun part... watching their reactions" DiCaprio later recalled. At the end of the take, (which is the one that made it into the film) the cast and crew gave DiCaprio a standing ovation.

Time and again with creativity and determination, actors and directors have turned an accident or injury to their advantage, not just overcoming adversity but using it to enhance their story telling.

DID YOU KNOW?

Harrison Ford's chin scar has been written into his films at least three times. Alden Ehrenreich had a scar added by the make-up department to help him look the part when he plays a young Han Solo in Solo (2018). It's used for character development in Working Girl (1988), and in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989), even though it's barely visible through the stubble, his scar is explained in a flashback depicting River Phoenix as a young Indy.



Haunted GENIUS



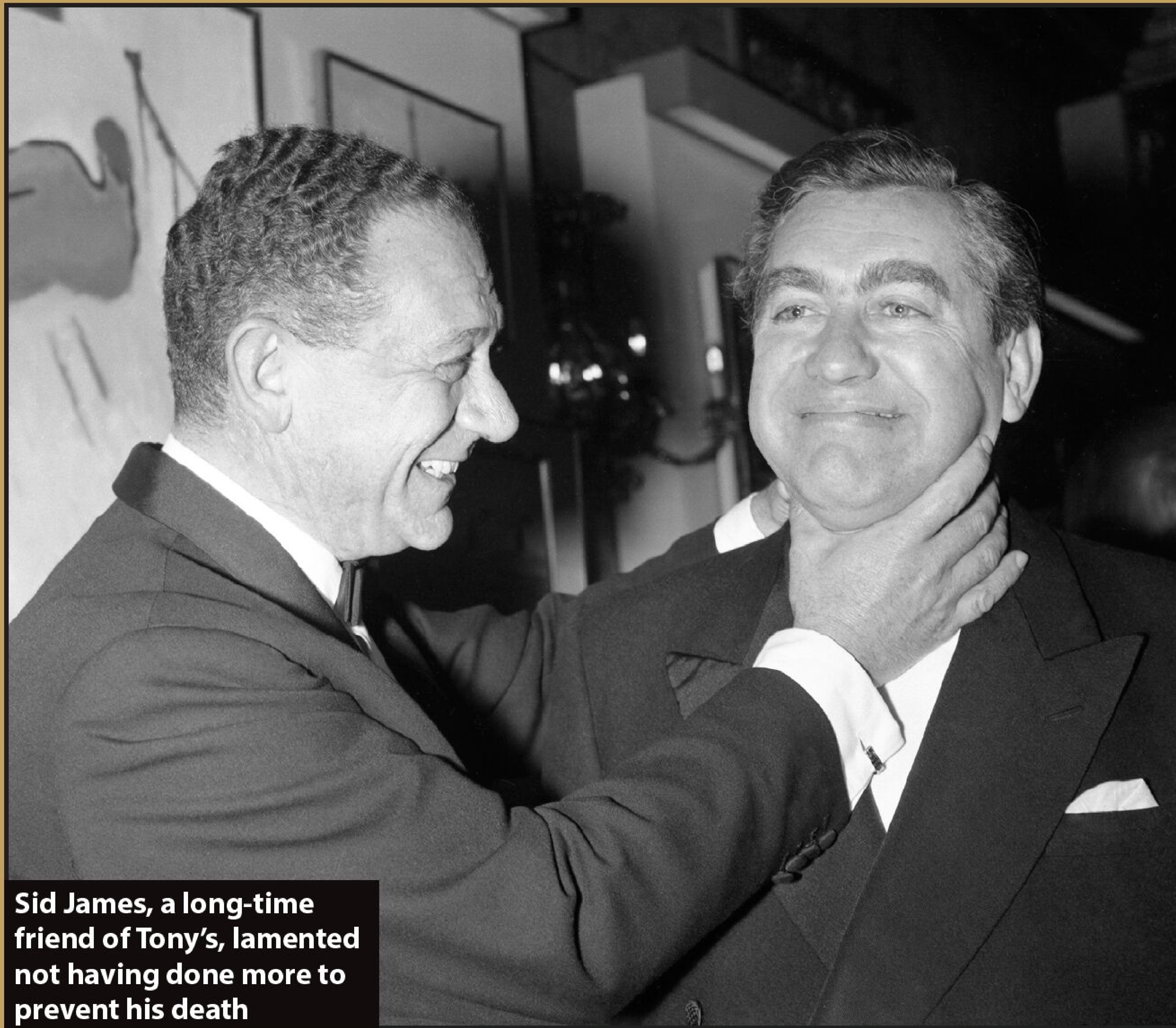
In Tony Hancock's centenary year, Steve Green looks at what started the comedian's tragic spiral into suicide



The spring of 1965 found Tony Hancock attempting to relax at the lavish Beverly Wiltshire Hotel, located in an historic suburb of Los Angeles south-west of the Hollywood Hills. He was staying there as the guest of Walt Disney Productions, preparing for the role of Quintin Bartlett, a Shakespearean actor caught up in the California Gold Rush, for a wild west comedy entitled The Adventures of Bullwhip Griffin. Although Roddy McDowall had been cast in the titular lead, a pugilistic butler, he and Hancock would share plenty of screen time as their characters recover a stolen map and become partners in a lucrative gold mine that later underwrites the restoration of San Francisco after the cataclysmic fire of 1851.

On the face of it, Tony should have been riding high – after lukewarm reviews for The Rebel (1961) and The Punch and Judy Man (1963), he was finally on the verge of long-sought-after international recognition, the same desire that led in 1960 to the end of his on-screen partnership

with Sid James and a shift from the hugely successful sitcom format Hancock had increasingly viewed as parochial and restrictive – but instead he was an emotional mess. Initially, he'd been accompanied in Los Angeles by Bernie Lang, one of his American representatives, but Lang had to return to the East Coast and Tony was left feeling lonely and isolated.



Sid James, a long-time friend of Tony's, lamented not having done more to prevent his death

CALL ME GENIUS

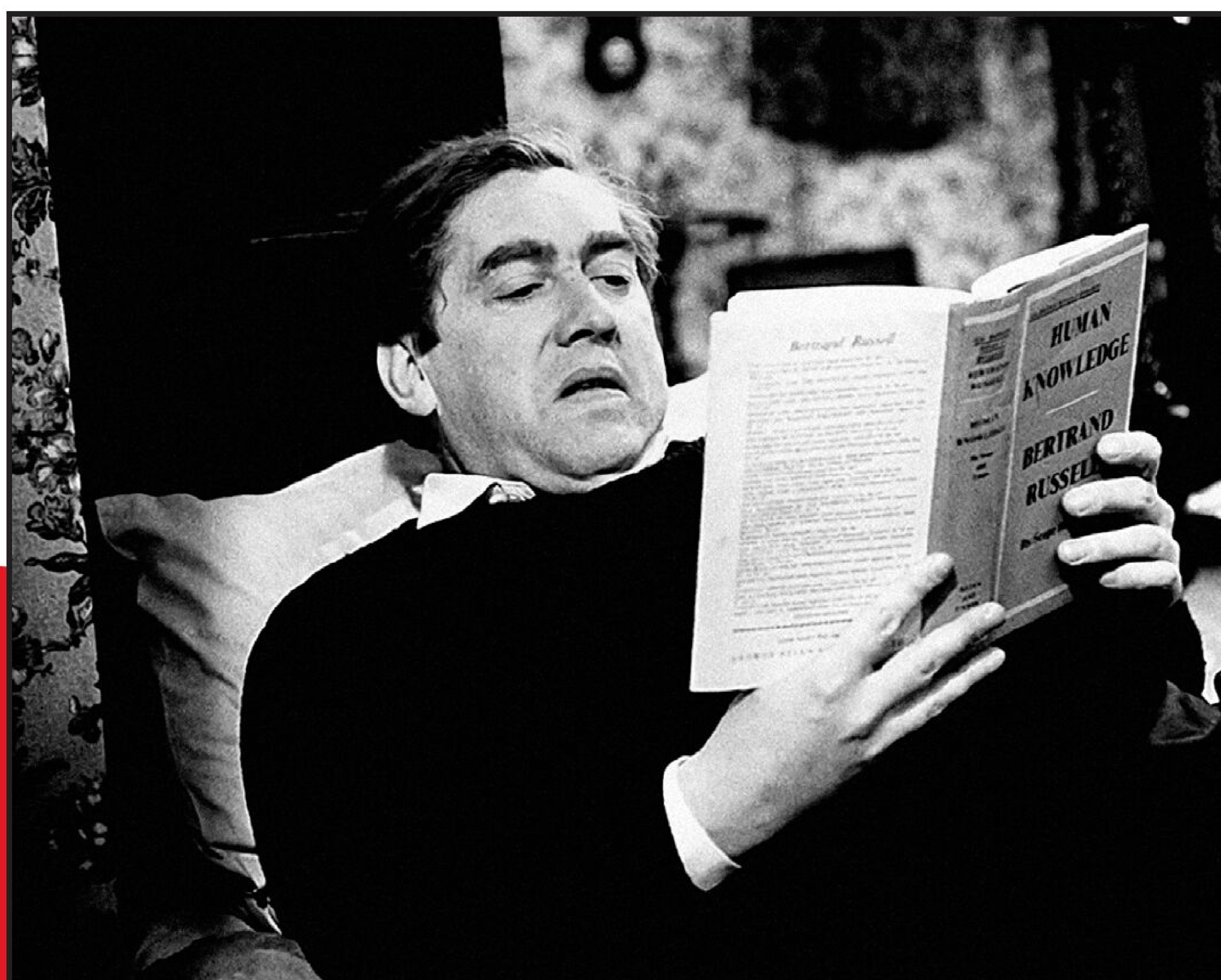
His British television career was effectively dead following the short-lived and critically panned switch to ITV in 1963 (virtually nothing survives of the six episodes of Hancock's broadcast in 1967, in which he played a nightclub compère). And all those instrumental in Hancock's BBC success – his writers, Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, and his agent, Beryl Vertue – had been ditched at a meeting one Sunday morning in October 1961, the same month The Rebel opened in New York under the arguably off-putting title Call Me Genius. Meanwhile, lawyers were nailing the lid down on Tony's 15-year marriage to first wife Cicely Romanis, a former catwalk model. East Cheam must have seemed 5,000 miles and a lifetime away.

Not for the first time, Hancock reached for the bottle (Champagne, "less fattening than vodka") as he struggled with learning the complicated mock-Shakespearean dialogue, knowing all too well he wouldn't have access to his trusty cue cards on the Disney set. There was even a rather pitiful drunken infatuation with the wife of a fellow hotel guest, word of which may have reached the oversized ears of the House of Mouse.

Buoyed by the timely arrival of Freddie Ross, Tony's current agent and long-time mistress (they would marry in December 1965, once his divorce was final), and relocation to the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City, he swore off the booze and focused on his script. Just one week later, the cameras were rolling, although Roddy McDowall would recall his co-star seemed "weighted by some obscure responsibility" and Hermione Baddeley, who played Irene Chesney in the film, suspected Disney was looking for an excuse to fire him, following reported run-ins over the quality of his lines.

When, on May 27, the on-set temperature soared and Tony (wearing, at the studio's insistence, a heavy coat and hat similar to those from his BBC heyday) collapsed, most likely with heat exhaustion, the die was cast: by the time he emerged from hospital two days later, the part had already been recast with Richard Haydn, fresh from his success in The Sound of Music (1965).

Although this was far from Tony Hancock's first professional setback – and, like so many before, at least partially at his own instigation – one cannot help wondering if it was in the actor's mind when he wrote, "Things seemed to go too wrong too many times," part of a note found near his body just three years later, while staying at a Sydney flat immediately below the new family home of Eddie Joffe, hired by Australia's Channel 7 to produce Tony's would-be comeback series.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Tony Hancock Appreciation Society was formed in 1976 and currently distributes its quarterly newsletter The Missing Page to around 750 paid members, many of whom will be present for its annual gathering, taking place in Solihull in September. Check out tonyhancock.org.uk for full details of all their activities, such as its podcast Very Nearly an Armful.



Tony starred in The Punch and Judy Man with John Le Mesurier



Tony's second wife Freddie Ross was a publicist for Sophia Loren, Julie Andrews, Benny Hill and Jim Dale

DID YOU KNOW?

In her memoir Lady Don't Fall Backwards, Joan Le Mesurier details her affair with Tony Hancock. She claims that a watch Tony had bought for her "mysteriously stopped at exactly the time he died", adding, "I continued to wear it, but left it set as it was and didn't wind it, as I took it to be a message from him."

ERRATIC BEHAVIOUR

Both his professional and personal lives lay in chaos. Other than a small role in the 1965 period comedy Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines, which had already been filmed before Tony's ill-fated trip to Hollywood, and a brief appearance in the closing section of The Wrong Box (1966), his movie career had failed to ignite, possibly dampened by rumours of his erratic behaviour during the Disney shoot.



Closer to home, Freddie had finally lost patience with Tony's drinking and filed for divorce, the strain having driven her to make several suicide attempts ("Our marriage broke up our friendship," she later admitted). To add to the turmoil, Freddie's departure had led Tony's close friend, John Le Mesurier, to invite him to stay at the Barons Court flat he shared with Joan, his wife of six months. Within weeks, Tony and Joan had begun an affair, a blaze of passion and heartfelt betrayal which was still smouldering when he departed for Australia in early April 1968, having obtained Joan's promise to leave John and marry Hancock if he could manage to stay sober for one year. However, his luggage, according to actress and confident Damaris Hayman, contained "enough pills to kill him several times over".

"My best is yet to come," Tony had bragged to the British press, but sadly, the writing on Hancock Down Under felt tired and derivative – and, to be frank, so did its star's performance. Only three episodes were completed before he penned his farewell notes (ironically, or perhaps pointedly, on the back of his latest script), and his brother Roger Hancock fortunately persuaded both the BBC and ITV to deny a British airing to the "comedy special" Channel 7 subsequently cobbled together from that footage.

Tony's old co-star Sid James was one of many friends and colleagues who later wondered if a word or action at the right moment might have altered events. The previous summer, he'd been driving through Piccadilly when he spotted Hancock on a traffic island, swaying and clearly drunk, but Tony had disappeared by the time Sid had parked and returned on foot; their paths would never cross again. "I wish to God I had been able to catch him that day," he admitted later, "it's the little things that can change people's lives."

Four months after Tony's death, J.B. Priestley's novel London End introduced readers to Lon Bracton, a popular but paranoid comic modelled on Hancock: "A comedian with a touch of genius, who had no enemy, except himself."



Nana Mouskouri
An unlikely pop icon

As the singer approaches her tenth decade, Nick Smurthwaite looks back at Nana Mouskouri's remarkable life from wartime Athens to global stardom

With more than 350 million album sales worldwide Nana Mouskouri is the most popular female recording artist of all time. She has recorded over 1,500 songs in more than 20 languages, including Hebrew, Mandarin, Welsh and Japanese.

In short, she is a living legend.

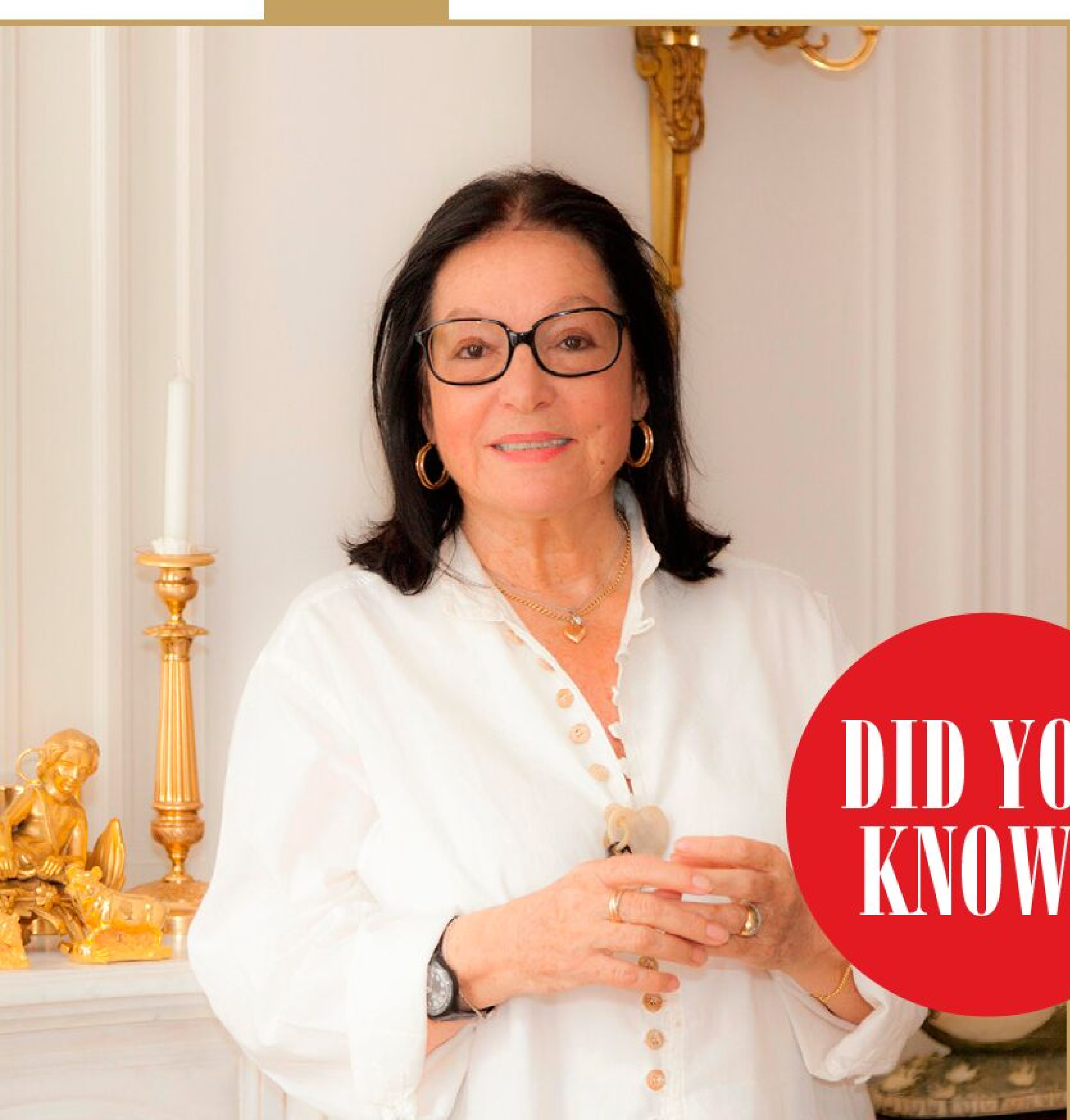
Her longevity as an international artist stems from her willingness to perform in different languages, and her disarming simplicity – her fan base loves the fact that she has stayed true to herself for six decades, relying on her sweet smile, tuneful voice, engaging personality, trademark black specs and black hair. No frills, no pyrotechnics, just familiar songs from a familiar and much-loved voice.

Now in her late 80s, her fans have grown old with Nana, it's unlikely that there were any millennials at her 80th birthday concerts a few years back! It is easy listening personified, not the kind of music you'd expect to find on many teens' Spotify playlist.

'A TALENTED HIPPY'

In the Seventies, when Nana was probably at her height of popularity in the UK she was famous enough to be parodied by both Benny Hill and the Two Ronnies, who styled her as Nana Moussaka (Barker), singing a duet with Corbett's Charles Azenough. Apparently she enjoyed the joke as much as everyone else.

Dame Edna Everage (Barry Humphries' comic creation), on whose chat show she appeared, referred to her as "a talented little Greek hippy," while complimenting her on her "face furniture", and her high-profile fans included Bob Dylan, who asked her to cover one



DID YOU KNOW? In response to the Greek financial crisis in 2010, Nana announced that she would forego her pension to contribute to the country's recovery.





Nana has received more than 300 gold and platinum records during her career

of his songs, Every Grain of Sand, and the late Leonard Cohen, whose song Hallelujah became a staple of her live act and with whom she had a strong friendship lasting until his death in 2016.

Nana grew up in Athens, where her father Constantine worked as a projectionist at an outdoor cinema situated in front of the house where they lived. Her childhood was blighted by conflict and stress, first the Nazi takeover of Greece, followed by civil war, from 1946-49. Already poor, the German occupation left the Mouskouri family destitute. During the first winter, 2,000 Greeks died of starvation. They lived on snails and frogs gathered from the street on rainy days.

Later, in her teens, while studying music at the Hellenic Conservatory in Athens, Nana got into trouble for moonlighting in nightclubs with a jazz quartet known as The Athenians. But her family was poor, her father a gambler, so the money she earned was needed. It also boosted the self-esteem of a shy, overweight girl with glasses to know she could command the attention and respect of a paying audience.

THE ROAD TO EUROVISION

Her first single, Fascination, was released in 1957, the same year she wowed an audience of American sailors on the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal on Independence Day. She won the Greek Song Festival in 1959 with a song written specially for her by Manos Hadjidakis who became her mentor, and who later won an Oscar for title song of the 1960 film Never on Sunday.

Nana's breakthrough song was The White Rose of Athens (1962), originally recorded in German, which sold more than a million records throughout Europe. A year later she represented Luxembourg in the Eurovision Song Contest with a French song, A Force de Prier (The Power of Prayer). By 1964 she had moved to Paris and befriended the French composer Michel Legrand who invited her to record the Oscar-nominated theme song to The Umbrellas of Cherbourg.

By the late Sixties Nana was a bona fide international star, and the BBC signed her up for her own TV show, Presenting Nana Mouskouri (1968-70), in which she welcomed guest artists such as The Swingle Swingers, Jacques Loussier, Scott Walker, guitarist John Williams, Kenneth McKellar and Nina van Pallandt, formerly of Nina and Frederick fame. It ran for two seasons, but only six episodes are still in existence.

At the urging of Audrey Hepburn, another high-profile fan, Mouskouri became a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF in 1993, the year Hepburn died. She gave a series of fundraising concerts for the orphaned children of Bosnia. In 1994 she was persuaded to stand for the European Parliament where she served as a member for Greece for five years, even though she had lived in Switzerland for many years.

Between 2005 and 2008 she embarked on a farewell concert tour of Europe, America, Canada, Australia. New Zealand, Asia and South America, culminating in two concerts in her old hometown, Athens. Then, much to everyone's surprise, she announced in 2014 she would stage a comeback tour to mark her 80th birthday through parts of Europe and North America. It remains to be seen whether her 90th birthday this October will herald yet another comeback for the seemingly ageless Greek star.



Ted Shackelford's character, Patrick Brogan, took his wife Sally and two children to Demeter City

Cops in

Douglas McPherson looks back 30 years to the making of Space Precinct, a special-effects-driven police show that was literally out of this world



"We've had every type of cop imaginable," said Gerry Anderson. "Except the space cop." Anderson filled his perceived gap in the market with Space Precinct, a hybrid of police procedural and sci-fi that blasted off in 1994.

The title sequence voice-over set out the premise: "The name's Brogan, Lieutenant Brogan. For 20 years I was with the NYPD. Now? Well, let's just say I've transferred to another precinct..."

His new beat was Demeter City on the planet Altor. Essentially, it was like any other shadowy, smoky, crime-filled metropolis, except that nearly every cop, criminal and informant was an alien, and they all drove flying cars.

Anderson made his name as the producer of Sixties puppet shows Thunderbirds, Stingray and Joe 90 before moving on to the live-action series UFO and Space: 1999. Space Precinct was perhaps the culmination of his work, mixing live action with puppet-like animatronic masks in stories aimed at families.

It was one of the most expensive TV series ever made – and looked it.

"This is stuff that Spielberg does," said Ted Shackelford, who played Brogan, in a Making of... documentary shot on set.

The £1 million cost of each episode required American investment, which came from Grove Television Enterprises, and an American star to ensure its appeal in the US.

AMERICAN INFLUENCE

Although the show was made in Britain, most of the writers were American, which gave the dialogue a zippy Stateside feel.

Shackelford was well known from his long-running role as Gary Ewing in Dallas and its spin-off, Knots Landing.

Rob Youngblood added all-American support as Brogan's young sidekick, Officer Haldane. Denmark's Simone Bendix completed the human cast as Haldane's will-they-won't-they love interest, Officer Castle.

The director of many episodes, John Glen, was well versed in family-friendly action spectacles, having helmed five James Bond films, including Licence to Kill (1989).

The look of Space Precinct was defined by the once-seen-never-forgotten masks worn by almost all the cast.

Of the two main alien races, the Creons looked a bit like ET, with wide-apart eyes. They included crusty police captain Podly, played by Jerome Willis with a broad Irish accent.

The Tarns, including Officer Took (Mary Woodvine), had a head shaped like an egg and pointy ears. They had a third eye in the middle of their foreheads that, when opened, gave them telepathic and telekinetic powers.

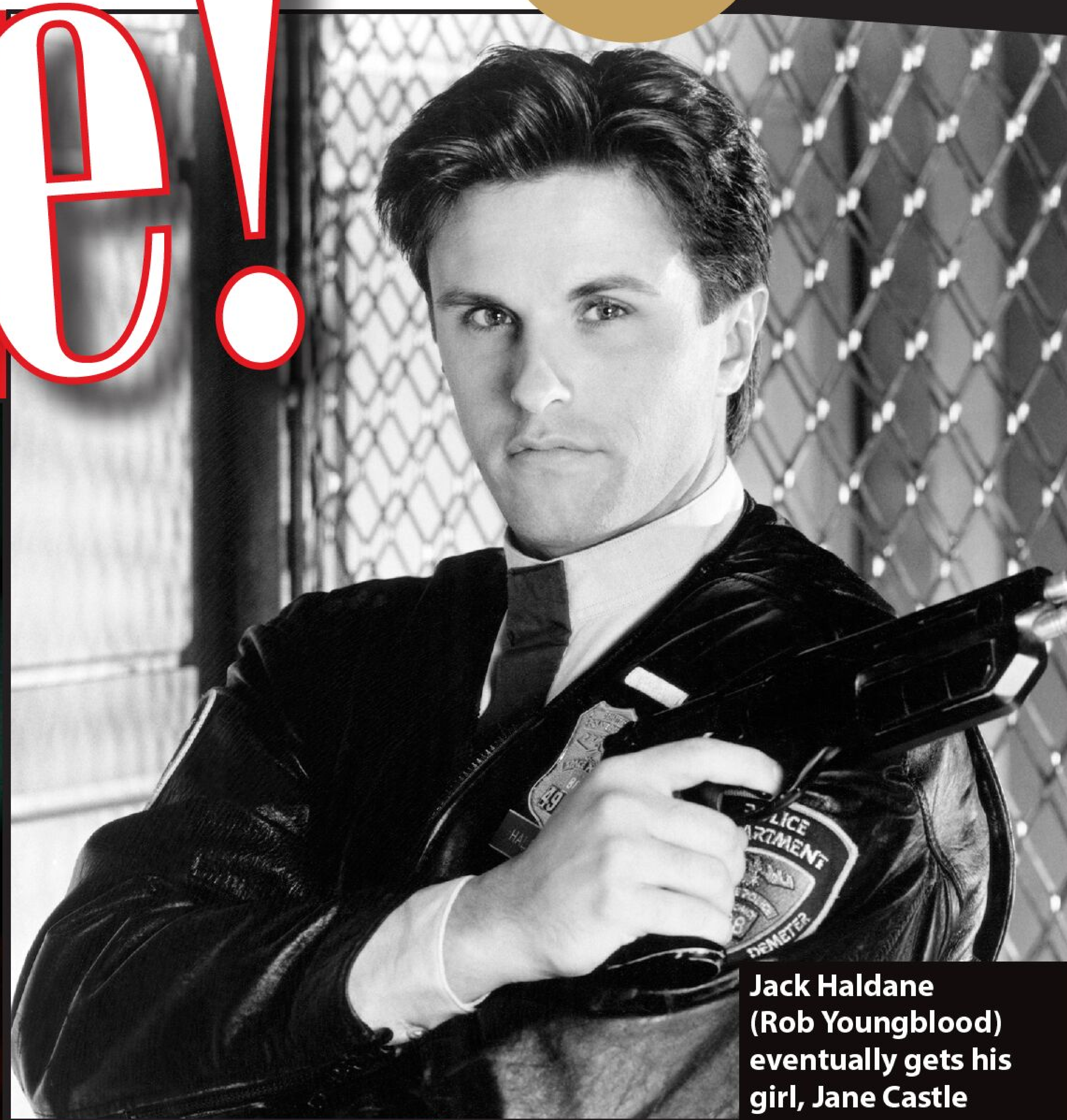
The masks were modelled onto plaster casts of the actors' faces, to ensure a snug fit, and packed with electronics. They were hot and uncomfortable and left the actors with little vision.

space!

DID YOU KNOW? Idris Elba made an early appearance as a pizza delivery man, overdubbed with an American accent.



Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet creator Gerry Anderson brought us aliens including the Creons and Tarns, with animatronic head masks and prosthetics



Jack Haldane (Rob Youngblood) eventually gets his girl, Jane Castle

While their lip movements were the actor's own, their eye and brow movements were radio controlled by operators standing on the side of the set.

Performances were a live collaboration between the actors and operators, who included Thunderbirds puppeteer Christine Glanville.

To compensate for limited facial expressions, the actors used exaggerated mime techniques, such as leaning forward with a tilted head to indicate listening, while the operators made their eyes blink and furrowed their brows.

If there were five aliens in a scene, there were as many animatronics operators, prompting Glen to quip that the aliens "had more people around them than Elizabeth Taylor".

Youngblood said it took "a couple of months" to get used to acting with the aliens. It was difficult to make eye contact with eyes that were so far apart. After that, he forgot they weren't real.

Shackelford and Youngblood spent a lot of time acting to green screens, their images later put into futuristic miniature sets.

STUNNING VISUAL EFFECTS

Aerial car chases were shot with a mixture of green screen and digital imagery for outer space sequences, and the sort of practical puppetry Anderson had honed on Thunderbirds, with models on wires flying between metre-tall skyscrapers on huge cityscape sets.

The practical explosions were spectacular.

"Whenever a craft crashes," said visual effects director Steven Begg, "Very much in the Gerry Anderson tradition, it crashes as if it's loaded with thousands of tons of TNT. It doesn't just blow up once, it blows up half a dozen times."

There were high hopes for Space Precinct. Vivid Imaginations produced an ambitious range of 13 action figures, plus two models of the flying craft. They didn't sell many, however.

The show proved popular in the UK, where it was first shown on Sky One and then in a Monday teatime slot on BBC2.

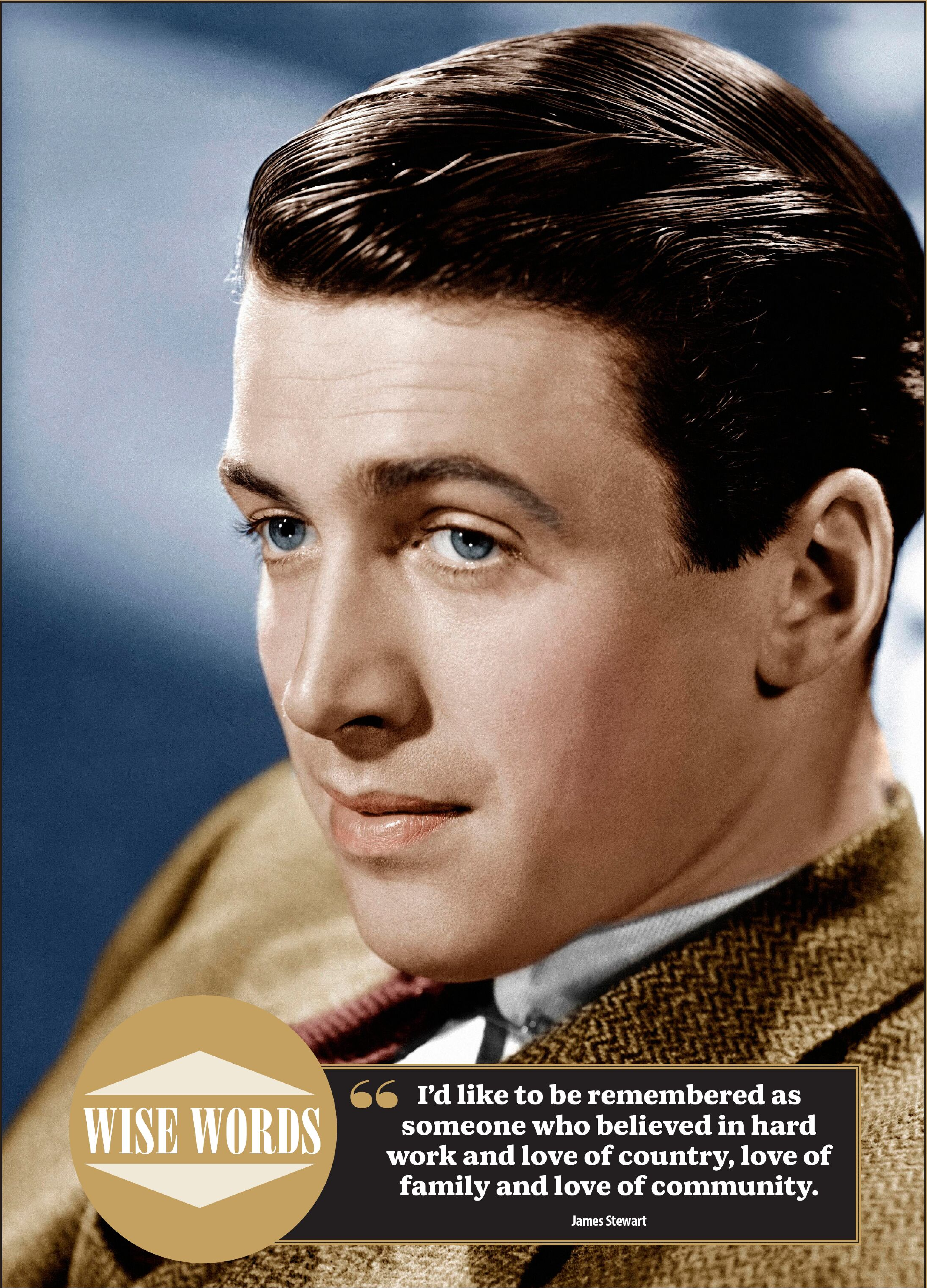
But it was lost in space in the US, the market it depended on financially. Broadcasters didn't know what to do with a series that looked like a kids' show but was considered too grown-up and violent for that age group (some of the more violent images were cut before its UK release).

It went out in late-night slots where it picked up a cult following among sleepless college students, but was never seen by the peak-time family audience it was designed for.

The resulting poor ratings meant a second season was never produced. It was, however, the first Gerry Anderson series to be released on DVD. Thirty years on, it still looks good and deserves to stand alongside Anderson's earlier, better-known work.



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WISE WORDS

> "I'd like to be remembered as someone who believed in hard work and love of country, love of family and love of community.

James Stewart

MOVIE MASTERCLASS No. 31

Terrible danger may have awaited the miniaturised children in family comedy, Honey, I Shrunk the Kids (1989), but bringing the idea to life had been a technical tour de force







What became of the child actors? Amy O'Neill reprised her role in the sequel and continued to guest star in popular TV shows such as Star Trek: The Next Generation (1987) and Murder, She Wrote (1991). Robert Oliveri also appeared in Honey, I Blew Up the Kid (1992) and Edward Scissorhands (1990). Jared Rushton was Tom Hanks' friend in Big (1988) and he continued to guest star on TV up to 2000. Thomas Wilson Brown had long-running roles on TV soaps Knots Landing (1990-91), and Days of Our Lives (1994-98) and was still making films as recently as 2020.



Struggling inventor Wayne Szalinski (Rick Moranis) accidentally shrinks his children, Amy (Amy O'Neill) and Nick (Robert Oliveri) and the neighbours' kids, Little Russ (Thomas Wilson Brown) and Ron (Jared Rushton), down to the size of a quarter-inch. While Wayne and his wife Diane (Marcia Strassman) search, the tiny children must work together to safely make their way home through a backyard wilderness filled with terrible danger.



When a miniaturised Nick Szalinski drops into a bowl of cereal, the milk was made from 16,000 gallons of chlorinated water, food thickener, and pigment while the Cheerios were 12ft-wide tractor inner tubes covered in foam.



The giant bee sequence had two bees, one big enough for the actors to ride on in front of a blue screen, and another mechanical bee with puppets of the children that could be moved by remote control. Antie, the heroic worker ant, was a huge animatronic puppet that took a dozen people to operate. They also made a ten-foot-tall oatmeal cookie and enormous blades of grass from polyurethane foam.

The script was written for Chevy Chase, but he was too busy on other projects. John Candy was also considered for the role of Wayne Szalinski but he recommended his friend Rick Moranis.



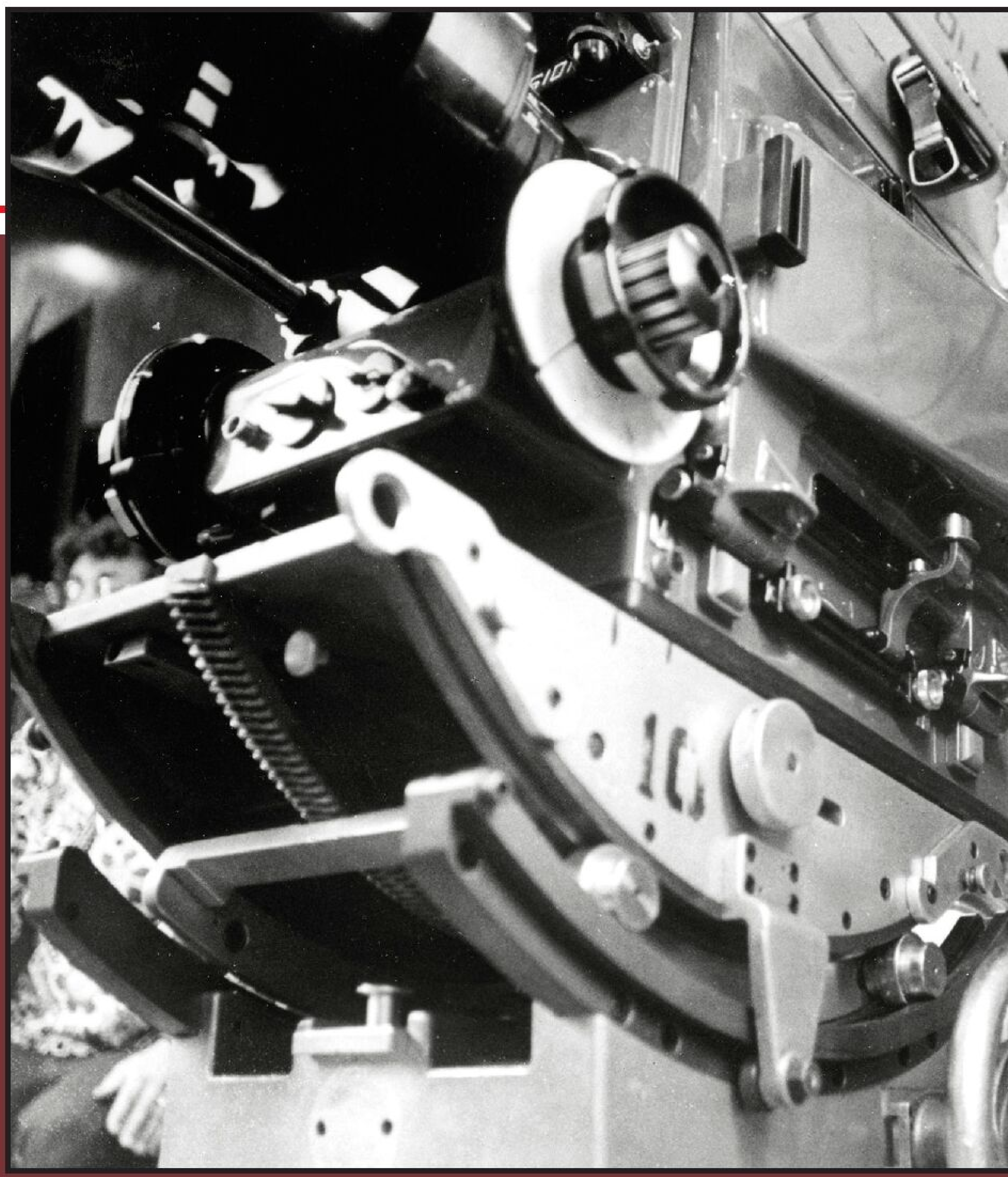


Following the death of his wife in 1991, Rick Moranis stepped away from acting to focus on raising their two children. He was set to star in Shrunk, a reboot of the franchise, but it was shelved in 2021 because of Covid.



Art director and special effects wizard Joe Johnston had worked on The Empire Strikes Back (1980) and Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981), but had only directed one student film before Honey. He asked Disney executive Jeffrey Katzenberg if he was being hired because of that film. Katzenberg replied "No, we're hiring you in spite of your film."

Fallen star



Chris Hallam charts the rise and fall of a one-time legend of Seventies cinema…

Just over 50 years ago, filmmaker, Peter Bogdanovich seemed to have achieved almost everything he could ever have wanted. His last three films, The Last Picture Show (1971), What's Up, Doc? (1972) and Paper Moon (1973) had all been big hits and Bogdanovich, who was then in his 30s, had been compared to his ultimate directing hero, Orson Welles. Bogdanovich furthermore had a beautiful young woman on his arm. He had ditched his first wife and two young daughters in favour of Cybill Shepherd, the 20-something star of The Last Picture Show (1971). The couple had set up home in a 7,000 square feet Spanish-style hacienda in Bel Air, just opposite another one of his Hollywood heroes, John Ford.

Had fame and success gone to Bogdanovich's head? Some thought so. The next few years saw the director's life and career collapse in a dramatic tale of hubris, adultery, bankruptcy, suicide and murder.

It had been January 1961, when Polly Platt had first approached Peter in his small, New York office. Polly had vowed not to get involved with another man following the recent death of her first husband in a car crash, shortly after a blazing row between him and Polly. But the attraction was undeniable. Soon they were married and moved to California where Polly threw herself wholeheartedly into advancing her second husband's ambitions to be a filmmaker.

It was Polly who reassured Peter that he didn't need to change his surname, which he worried was too long to appear on billboards. It was Polly who first read Larry McMurtry's novel, The Last Picture Show and who persuaded Peter that it might be ideal for his second film. It was Polly too, who selected the 20-year-old model Cybill Shepherd for the key role of Jacy Farrow, pointing her out to Peter after spotting her on the cover of a magazine. She would later come to regret this.

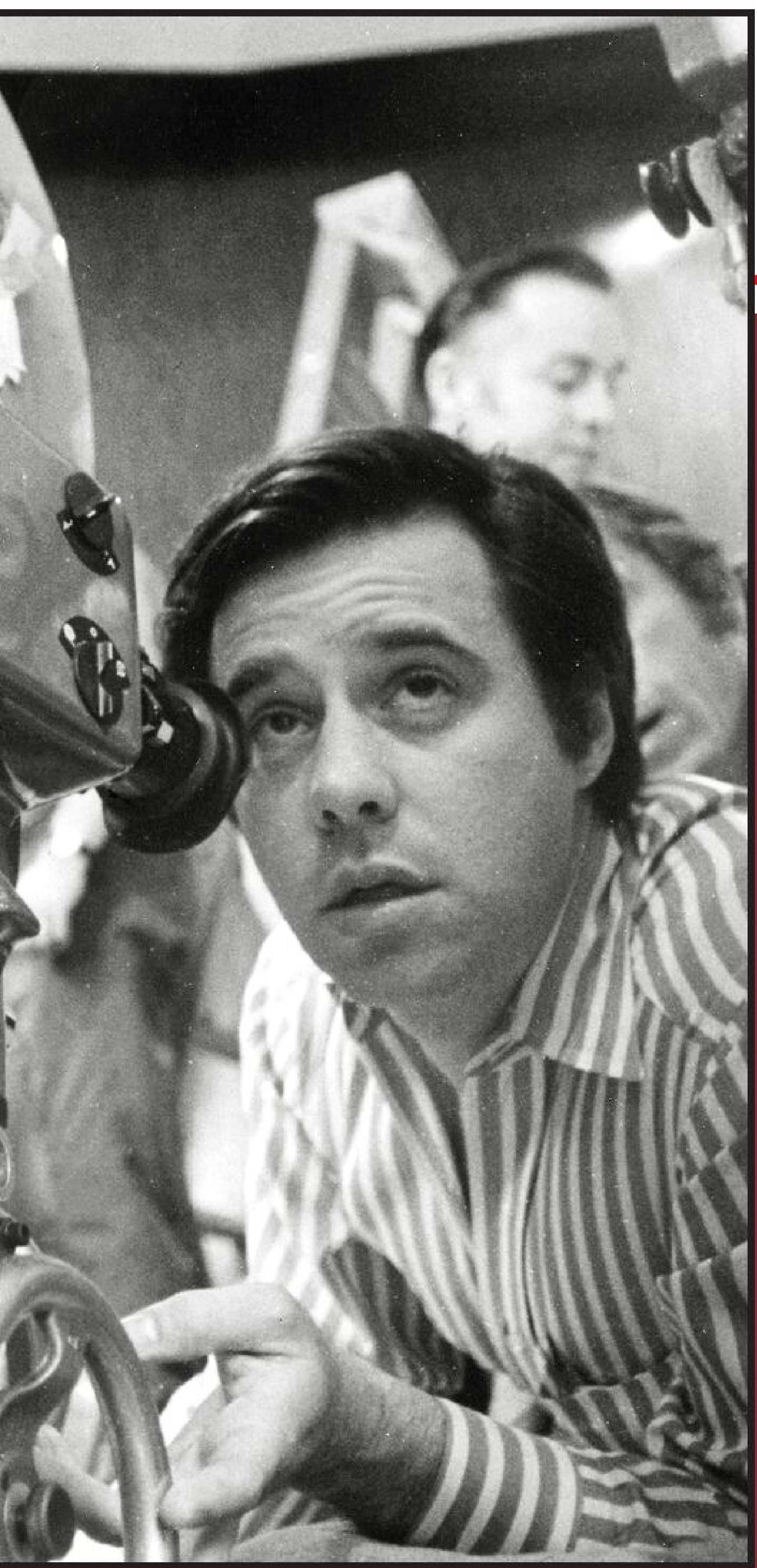


Polly Platt continued to collaborate on movie projects with Bogdanovich, even after he divorced her for Cybill Shepherd in 1971

CYBILL DISOBEDIENCE

Peter grew angry the first time Polly suggested he might be falling in love with his lead actress. But, in truth, Polly's fears were well-founded. Cybill had broken off the fling she was having with her young co-star, Jeff Bridges and began a full-blown affair with Bogdanovich instead. Polly endured numerous humiliations on set, at one point sneaking out of the café, where she had been dining alone, on all fours to avoid an awkward encounter with Peter and Cybill who she had spotted entering together. On another occasion, during a fierce row with Peter, Polly deliberately drove their car off the road and into a ditch at high speed.

Such was Polly's commitment to The Last Picture Show, however, that she continued to work on it. She was even in charge of hair and make-up,





As a director, Bogdanovich nurtured the careers of many talented actors, including girlfriend Cybill Shepherd

thus ensuring much of her job involved making her husband's mistress look as beautiful as possible on screen.

The affair ultimately seriously damaged Bogdanovich's career. Films such as Daisy Miller (1974), a literary adaptation starring Shepherd, not only flopped at the box office but undermined the director's credibility. The film was widely seen as a vanity project made to please his young girlfriend who, it was argued (somewhat unfairly) couldn't act anyway.



The tragic story of Dorothy Stratten (*above*) is portrayed by Jamie Lee Curtis in Death of a Centerfold: The Dorothy Stratten Story (1981)

MURDER IN TINSELTOWN

By 1978, Cybill had left Peter for a younger man. Bogdanovich was depressed and spent lots of time hanging around Hugh Hefner's Playboy mansion. It was here, he ran into Dorothy Stratten, an 18-year-old former waitress destined to become Playmate of the Year. Spectacularly beautiful, she was also almost comically near-sighted, often unwittingly causing accidents because she refused to wear glasses. Bogdanovich, by now just entering his 40s, was immediately smitten. He told her he was making a film (he wasn't) and that he had made Cybill Shepherd a star and would do the same for her. He later cast her in his 1981 film, They All Laughed.

When the couple moved in together Dorothy was, in fact, already married to Paul Snider, a hustler, who had been managing her career. Friends warned the couple that Snider was jealous and potentially unstable. He had bought a shotgun and had started shooting clay pigeons in his backyard. He also turned up at Bogdanovich's ex-wife's house, angrily demanding to see the director.

One day, in August 1980, Dorothy secretly went to Snider to pay him some of the money he felt he was owed. She never returned.

Hugh Hefner called Peter with the terrible news just after midnight. Two bodies had been found at Snider's home. Snider had shot Dorothy dead and then turned the gun on himself. Bogdanovich was utterly devastated. He dropped the phone and collapsed to the floor in shock.

Happily, Bogdanovich's life and career did recover from this tragic low point. In 1988, he married Louise Stratten. The wedding generated much media interest simply because Louise was the younger sister of the murdered Dorothy. Nearly 30 years younger than Peter, Louise ultimately forged a career as an actress and writer/producer herself. They divorced in 2001.

Bogdanovich died in 2022, aged 82. Before then, he directed the acclaimed film, Mask (1985) starring Eric Stoltz, Texasville (1990), a sequel to The Last Picture Show and Hollywood-based mystery, The Cat's Meow (2001) among other things, but never again achieved the levels of success he had enjoyed in his early career. He also realised one of his early loves: acting, appearing in TV shows such as Northern Exposure (1990-95) and The Sopranos (1999-2007). He would often play himself: that is, a once great filmmaker now entering old age with a lot of memories, some very good, some very bad.





It was one of Britain's most popular Seventies sitcoms. But when the last customer left the store, what secrets lurked behind the scenes of Are You Being Served? Chris Hallam finds out…

Grace u

"Ground floor! Perfumery, stationery and leather goods. Wigs and haberdashery, kitchenware and food. Going up…." With its winning theme tune, love of innuendo and cast of memorable characters, Are You Being Served? was destined to become one of Britain's best-loved sitcoms. But to begin with, no one wanted to commission it.

The idea had come from another future sitcom star, Joanna Lumley during her short-lived marriage to writer, Jeremy Lloyd at the start of the Seventies. In his youth, just after the war, Lloyd had worked at the prestigious Simpson's store in Piccadilly. Lumley's suggestion was simple: Why didn't he write a comedy series inspired by his experiences? Lloyd teamed up with Dad's Army co-writer, David Croft and together they did just that.

The result was set in Grace Brothers, a fading London department store ran by elderly out-of-touch management. Staff included officious, silken-voiced, moustached floor-walker, Captain Peacock (Frank Thornton), outspoken head of ladies fashion, Mrs Slocombe (Mollie Sugden), her assistant, the brassy Miss Brahms (Wendy Richard), who would typically be the subject of sexist remarks from the cheeky junior sales assistant, Mr Lucas (Trevor Bannister). Not to forget, the senior sales assistant in the Menswear department, Mr Humphries (John Inman). A camp, sharp-tongued but good-natured fellow, he would soon become a household name with people impersonating his catchphrase, "I'm free!" throughout the land.

TROUBLE IN STORE

It was a dream cast, but initially the BBC were unsure they even wanted to broadcast the pilot. It was eventually shown to good ratings, despite no promotion, only as a result of a scheduling hole generated by the cancellation of many live sports events due to terrorist activity at the 1972 Munich Olympics. But even then, the BBC was unsure about it. In the end, a full series was only commissioned when production was unexpectedly delayed on the latest series of Alf Garnett sitcom, Till Death Us Do Part in 1973. Are You Being Served? aired instead and became a big success from its second series on.

Despite this, there was still unease over the bawdy Carry On-style flavour of the show. There were concerns about Mrs Slocombe's constant references to her pussy, a surprisingly bold sexual innuendo for a British TV comedy of the time. The joke played well again when the show attracted a large following with US TV audiences in the Nineties. Some people also voiced concerns over the apparent overt homosexuality





nder fire

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1992, five key members of the cast were reunited for a new spin-off series, Grace & Favour which saw Mrs Slocombe, Mr Humphries, Captain Peacock, Miss Brahms and one-time floor manager, Mr Rumbold (Nicholas Smith) inheriting a country estate together as a result of a corrupt Grace Brothers pension scheme. The new show was not a hit.

In 2016, the show was revived for a one-off special featuring a new cast including the late Only Fools and Horses actor, John Challis as Captain Peacock, Sherrie Hewson as Mrs Slocombe, Jason Watkins as Mr Humphries and Matthew Horne, Arthur Smith and the late Roy Barraclough among those also appearing.

of Mr Humphries. In fact, although the actor, John Inman was himself gay, the character's sexuality (although never really in serious doubt) was never definitively clarified in the show.

Audiences, anyway, continued to enjoy it. With increasing popularity in 1976, there was a stage production and a big-screen version released the following year. At its peak, 22 million people watched an episode of the seventh series, which aired in 1979.

There were only minor tensions behind the scenes. Initially, the show was seen partly as a vehicle for Trevor Bannister and there were issues over whether he or Mollie Sugden should receive top billing. In time, it became clear that John Inman's Mr Humphries had become the breakout star of the series. In 1976, Inman was voted Funniest Man on Television by TV Times readers and was declared BBC TV's Personality of the Year. When a new (ultimately short-lived) version of the sitcom was launched in Australia, Inman was the only member of the original show to be recruited for the Antipodean version. Inman, in fact, was often criticised for presenting a stereotypical image of homosexuality. Despite this, he and Sugden continued to vie for top billing as the true star of the original show.



Privately, the unhappy personal life of actress Wendy Richard, who was in an abusive relationship, was another concern. Make-up artists often had to work hard to conceal her bruises from the wider public.

CLOSING TIME

By the later series, the show was exhibiting definite signs of fatigue. Trevor Bannister, who had always seemed too old for the role of Mr Lucas had left, while by 1985, Wendy Richard had already taken on what would become the defining role of her life, that of Pauline Fowler in the new TV soap, EastEnders.

More seriously, scriptwriters, Croft and Perry, who were now busy writing, 'Allo 'Allo!, seemed to be scraping the barrel, ideas-wise. One episode saw a lost underwater diver turning up unexpectedly in the store. Another saw Mrs Slocombe reverting to her childhood state after losing her memory. Clearly it was time to shut up shop and so, in 1985, after ten series, Grace Brothers closed its doors for the final time.



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

Humphrey Bogart certainly has his hands full with the Dead End Kids, Gabriel Dell, Leo Gorcey, Bobby Jordan and Billy Halop. The group of young actors developed a bit of a reputation on set. During production of Dead End (1937) they ran wild around the studio, destroying property, including crashing a truck into a sound stage and throwing a lit pack of firecrackers through Bogart's dressing room window.

MGM boss Samuel Goldwyn had seen the boys on Broadway in Sidney Kingsley's play Dead End. He paid $165,000 for the rights to turn it into a film and brought the boys from New York to Hollywood. After their destructive antics Goldwyn sold their contract to Warner Bros. where they made six films, including Angels with Dirty Faces (1938) with Bogart (again) and James Cagney, They Made Me a Criminal (1939) with John Garfield, and Hell's Kitchen (1939) with Ronald Reagan.

The various teams that began life as The Dead End Kids ultimately made 89 films and three serials for four different studios during their 21-year-long career.

The original six members were the leader Billy Halop, pint-sized wise guy Leo Gorcey, well-meaning Bernard Punsly, scatter-brained Huntz Hall, resourceful Gabriel Dell and the youngest member Bobby Jordan.



DID YOU KNOW?

Huntz Hall appears on the cover of Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (back row third from right) after Leo Gorcey was removed because he asked for a fee.



The controversial MR WINNER



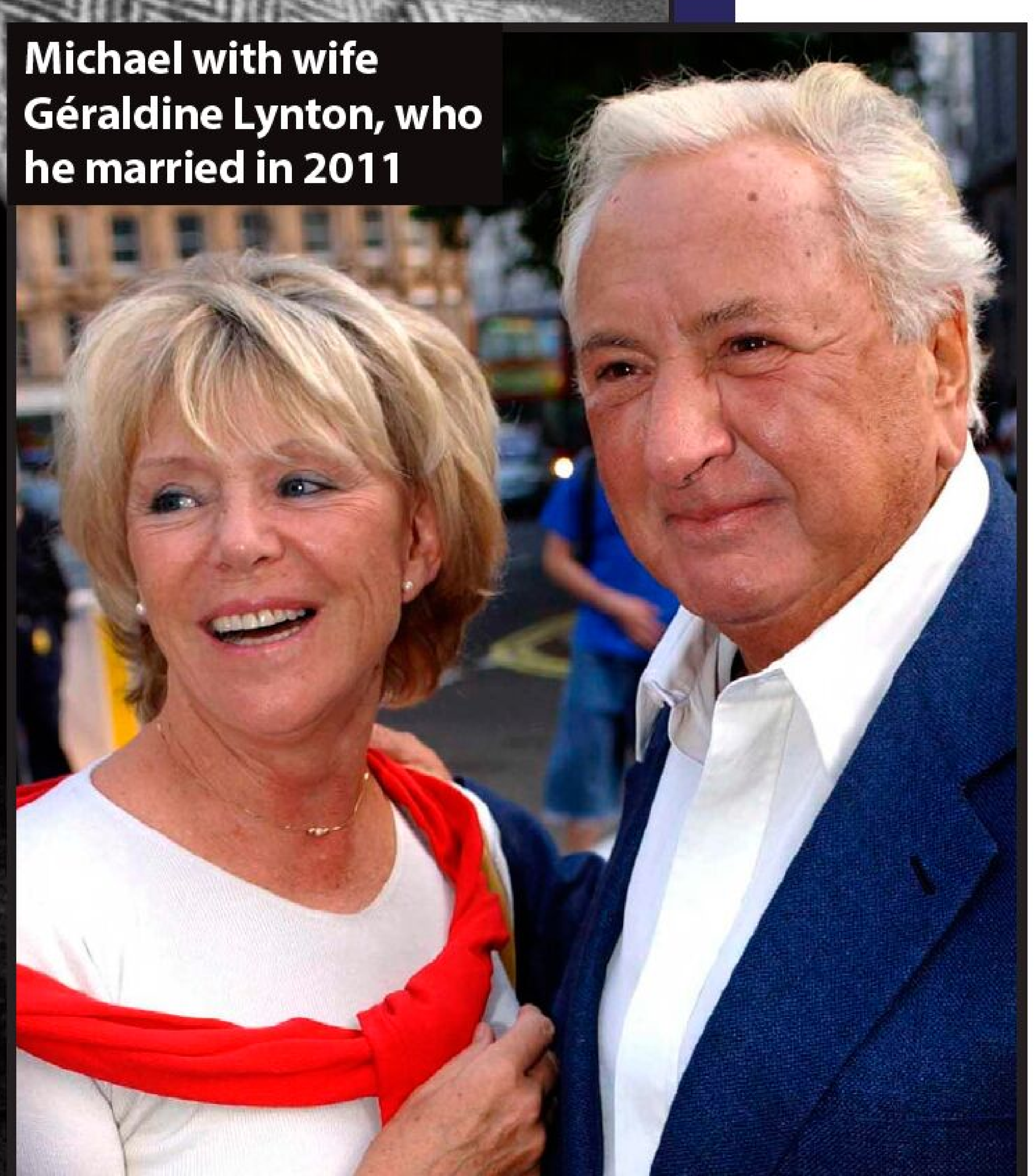


Charles Bronson's character in Death Wish was originally intended for Steve McQueen, who turned it down

Creative visionary or sleazy dilettante? Charles Rollings re-examines the career of one of the UK's most flamboyant and controversial directors

Michael Winner is Britain's most reviled film director. He was snubbed by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts and the British Film Institute. The Monthly Film Bulletin routinely dismissed his films, while Sight & Sound, for a long time, refused even to review them. Not one of them received – or was even nominated for – a significant award. Nor do they feature in any 'Must See' encyclopaedia or any 'Top Ten' list. The only book on his career, The Films of Michael Winner, has not been updated since first appearing in 1978.

Yet in a career spanning more than 40 years, Winner made 33 feature films, plus several second features and shorts. Although when he started out only three in ten movies were financially successful, most of his made a profit. At the end of the Sixties he was hailed by The Guardian's film critic, Derek Malcolm, as "the one-man British film industry", and on his death on January 21, 2013, at the age of 77, The Telegraph grudgingly remembered him as "one of Britain's few commercially viable film directors".

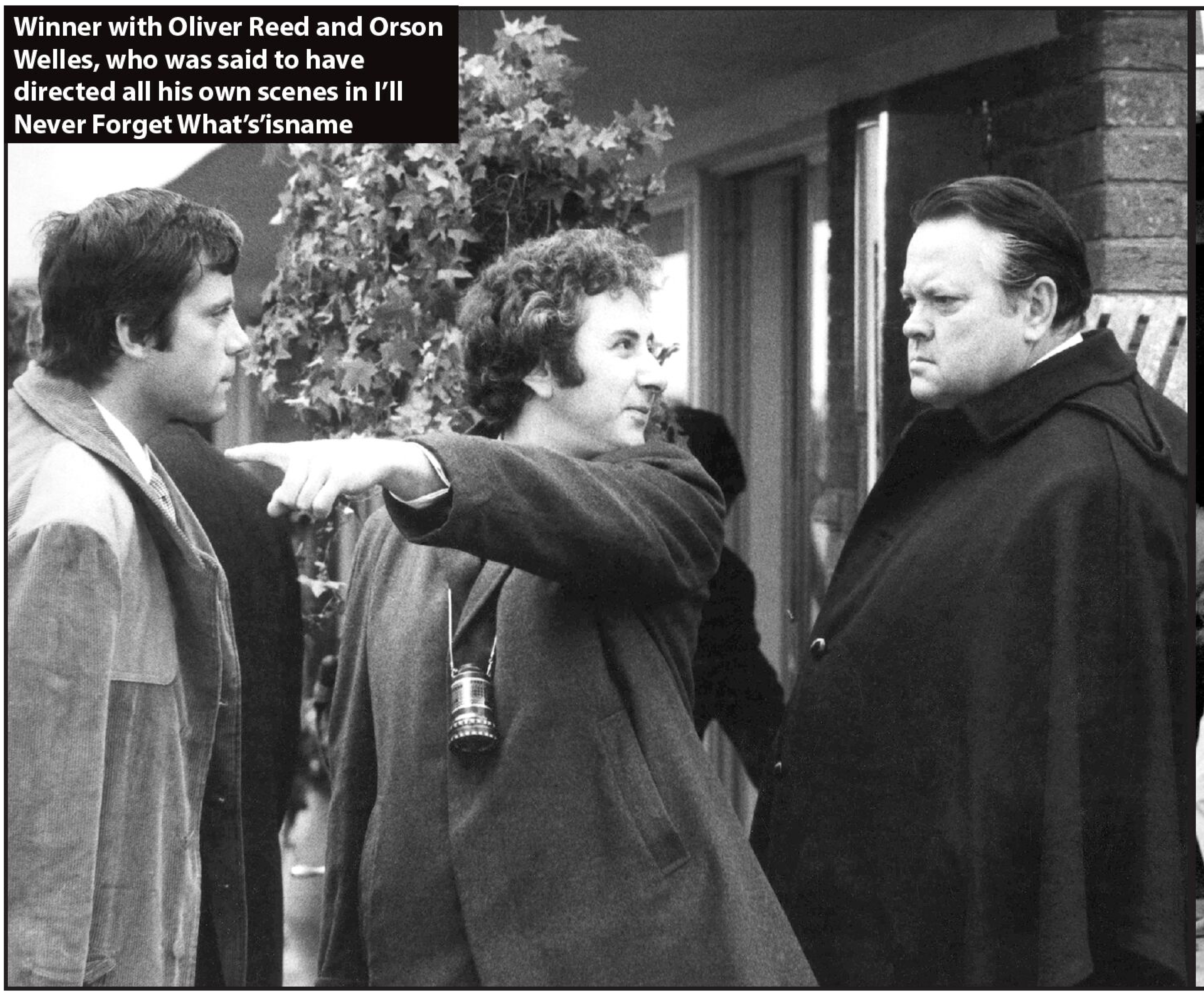


Michael with wife Géraldine Lynton, who he married in 2011

Whatever his faults or attributes as a filmmaker, the one constant about him was that he was an outsider. Born Robert Michael Winner in Hampstead on October 30, 1935, he was the only child of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who had no connection whatsoever with the film industry. But

the magic of the picture palace inspired him, from the age of five, to become a director. His efforts, in his youth, to get a foot in the door were met with resistance: he was told he had no hope until he was at least 40.

With no choice but to go it alone, he raised loans from his friends and his father to write, produce and direct his first film, The Square (1957), a charming 17-minute short, starring veteran actor A.E. Matthews as an old man who must leave his house, which is being demolished, and is treated by local residents to a farewell street party. Beautifully photographed and elegiac, its use of outside locations and popular music, and its portrayal of the relentlessness of progress, foreshadowed much of his later work. Winner was unable to find a distributor for it, however, and it was hardly seen until the BFI released it on DVD in 2016.



Winner with Oliver Reed and Orson Welles, who was said to have directed all his own scenes in I'll Never Forget What's'isname

TIME FOR CHANGE

Claiming technical expertise he did not possess, he wangled his way into writing, producing and directing shorts for cheapskate producer E.J. Fancey and the eccentric Harold Baim, and into editing several now-forgotten TV series. At last, in 1958, one of his screenplays, the neat little crime drama Man with a Gun (1958), was accepted by Merton Park Studios and made as a low-budget second feature. But it wasn't until 1961 that he got his first shot at directing a feature film, Play it Cool (1962), a pop musical starring Billy Fury and showcasing the talents of (among others) Helen Shapiro and Bobby Vee.

Young rock 'n' rollers were taking over the record charts now that teenagers had money to spare, and movies featuring them were attracting a large youth audience. The flipside of the New Wave kitchen-sink dramas that had been sweeping Britain since 1959, pop musicals soon gave way to a slew of films capturing Swinging Sixties optimism. For the next eight years Winner would combine pop music, contemporary hedonism and the 'angry young man' drama in a run of iconoclastic films: West 11 (1963), The System (1964), You Must Be Joking! (1965), The Jokers, I'll Never Forget What's'isname (both 1967), Hannibal Brooks (1969) and The Games (1970).

This was the most consistently satisfying period of Winner's career. The grim bedsitter-land melodrama West 11 and sports drama The Games were equal to anything by John Schlesinger, while his comedies compared well with those of Ealing Studios, the Boulting brothers and Launder & Gilliat. All these films, as well as those that followed, demonstrated his remarkable ability to corral marquee names, stalwart character actors and burgeoning talent, as well as the best technicians. He surmounted logistical problems that would have floored directors with less energy, enthusiasm, determination and chutzpah. But while his films were praised by a few with-it champions, they attracted brickbats from old-school film critics and several led to conflict with censors, who wanted one of them, The System, banned outright.

AMERICAN APPEAL

The System, however, proved a game-changer. An ultimately sad story about young men at a seaside resort who exploit unattached girls on holiday, it earned glowing reviews in America (where it was renamed The Girl-Getters). This enabled Winner to raise money for The Jokers and Hannibal Brooks, which again hit paydirt, Stateside. Since the USA appreciated him, off to Hollywood he went. Although he returned to Britain to shoot The Nightcomers (1971) and The Big Sleep (1978), the balance of his Seventies films were made abroad. Having effectively snubbed the British film industry for snubbing him, Winner from now on would receive even worse treatment.

The Nightcomers, a prequel to Henry James' short story The Turn of the Screw and Winner's only foray into the gothic, was described by The Monthly Film Bulletin as "vulgar and artless" (although it easily stands up against the same year's L.P. Hartley adaptation of The



Directing Burt Lancaster and Robert Ryan in violent Western, Lawman



Jeremy Irons and Prunella Scales star in A Chorus of Disapproval, a film in which Winner performed five duties; director, producer, co-screenwriter, editor and casting director

Go-Between, which is considered a masterpiece). His two thought-provoking revisionist Westerns, Lawman (1971) and Chato's Land (1972), received mostly hostile notices, as did his taut hit-man thriller The Mechanic (1972), despite the last two making the leading man, Charles Bronson, a bankable star. Even Scorpio (1973), the most intelligent espionage movie since 1965's The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, was merely, according to F. Maurice Speed's annual Film Review, "Conventional; violent; exciting".

TRIGGER POINT

The films that both made and broke Winner's reputation, however, were Death Wish (1974) and two of its four sequels. Death Wish, in which Charles Bronson goes on a murder-spree in New York after his wife and daughter are gang-raped, was a mega-hit, lapped up by the libertarian right, but loathed by the liberals, the left and self-appointed moral guardians, who accused it of inciting vigilantism. None of them, however, was willing to confront and discuss rationally the issues that this or any of Winner's revenge thrillers raised.

Winner courageously went on TV to defend the film – and poo-pooed his detractors – but chose to distance himself from the thriller genre by making Won Ton Ton: the Dog Who Saved Hollywood (1976), a thinly disguised biopic of Rin Tin Tin. This was a critical and box-office disaster, largely because audiences were not ready for its biting critique of Hollywood. His only horror flick, The Sentinel (1977), was met with derision, while his 1978 re-imaging of Raymond Chandler's The Big Sleep was rightly considered a crushing bore. He was back on form with the Bond-style Firepower (1979), but the convoluted plot baffled the critics and audiences stayed away.

A SAD DECLINE

Desperate for another hit, Winner came up with Death Wish II (1982), set in LA this time, with the violence ratcheted up. When his next two movies flopped, he again returned to his commercially bankable franchise with Death Wish 3 (1985). It was No.1 at the US box office for two weekends in a row and earned more than $16 million in seven weeks. Although some critics thought it slightly better than Death Wish II, once again most were hostile. There was, perhaps, a reason Winner's next-but-one movie, in 1989, was A Chorus of Disapproval, based on the play by Alan Ayckbourn.

In any event, from then on it was downhill. He never made another Death Wish film (the last two – by other directors – were far worse than his!), and all his films from 1985 to 1999 were critical and commercial failures.

After 1998's black comedy Parting Shots, widely regarded as one of the worst movies ever made, he turned his back on the industry to which he had devoted his life at the sacrifice of everything else. He dissipated his talents by hosting the TV series Michael Winner's True Crimes, making some embarrassing TV adverts for Esure, guesting on panel shows, becoming an outspoken restaurant critic for The Sunday Times, and writing several books based on his columns (as well as two entertaining and informative memoirs). He had become a grotesque parody of himself. Perhaps this is the price we pay when a talented outsider is snubbed by what he called an "incestuous clique of morons".

DID YOU KNOW?

Dozens of popular actors, writers, composers and film technicians worked repeatedly with Michael Winner, almost resembling a repertory company. Among the actors were Oliver Reed, Charles Bronson and Harry Andrews (who made five movies each) and Richard Wattis, Dennis Price, Ralph Waite, Edward Fox, Peter Barkworth and Jenny Seagrove (who each worked with him three times).



The second Mrs Taylor

Exotic beauty Ursula Thiess overcame hardship and tragedy to forge a career in Hollywood, only to give it all up when she fell in love with Robert Taylor. Allan Hunter explores her life

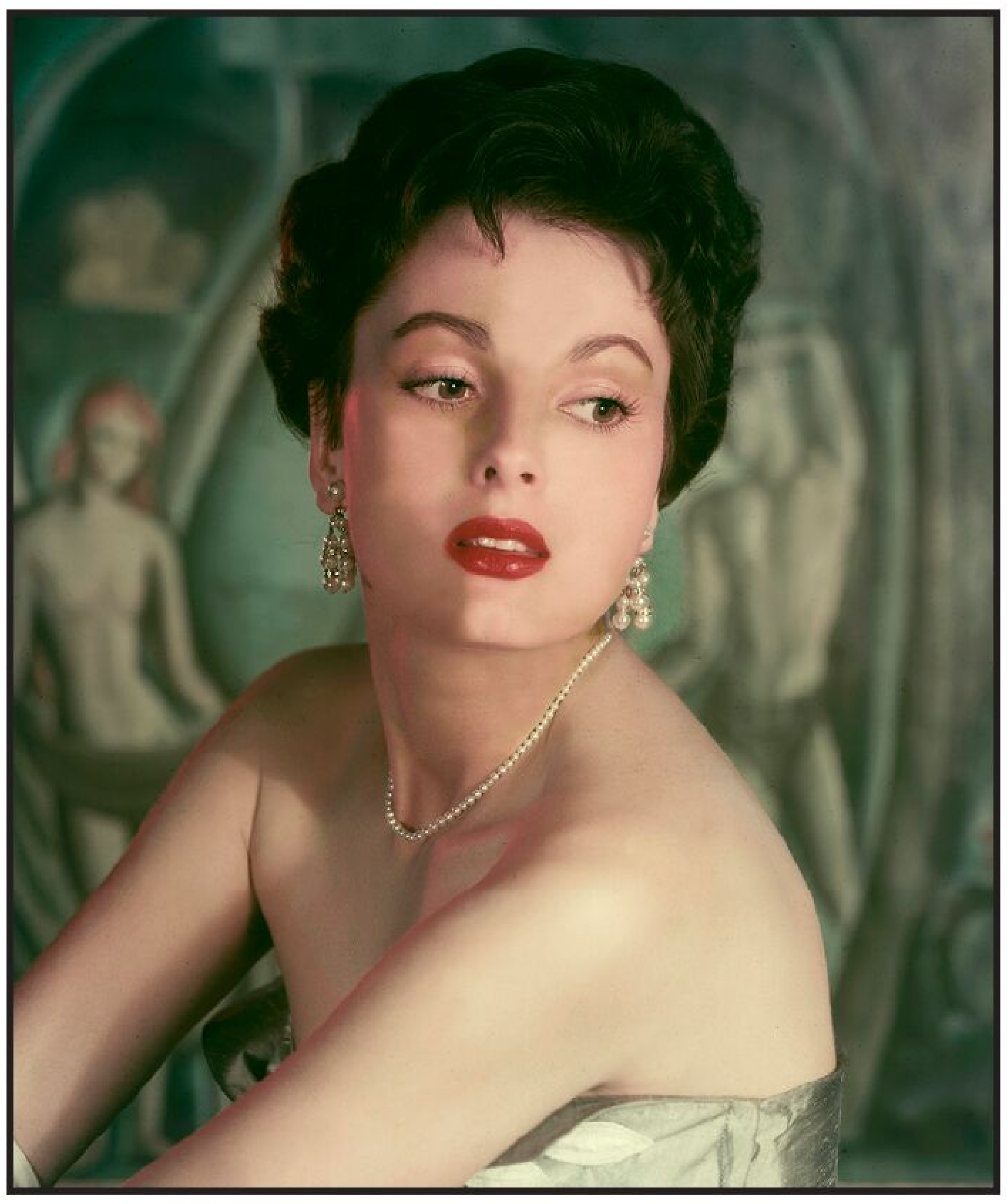
Ursula Thiess was once described as "the most beautiful woman in the world". When Robert Taylor fell in love with her, one reporter joked that Taylor was "finally dating someone prettier than himself" (although quite what Barbara Stanwyck thought of that is anyone's guess!). Taylor's 12-year marriage to Stanwyck had only recently ended when he went on a blind date with Thiess. She was also divorced and just embarking on her short-lived Hollywood career. His star was on the rise again thanks to the success of the epic Quo Vadis (1951). Neither of them was looking for a serious relationship, but by May 1954 they were married and their happy ever after lasted until Taylor's death from cancer in 1969 at just 57.

TRAGEDY

Thiess had known a great deal of tragedy in her early life. Born Ursula Schmidt in Hamburg on May 15, 1924, she lived through the horrors of the Nazi era. Her father was imprisoned for embezzlement when she was 11, and her parents divorced the following year. Her mother Wilhelmine subsequently married Shakespearean actor Hans Huth, who encouraged Ursula in her dream of becoming an actress. Her beloved grandmother died when Ursula was 17, and her grandfather would take his own life by jumping from a second-storey window.

Ursula married film producer Georg Otto Thiess in December 1942, their daughter Manuela was born in 1943 and a son Michael followed in 1945. Thiess was a cruel, physically abusive and relentlessly unfaithful husband. In her autobiography, Ursula wrote: "He became the man to whom I gave my all and who had me live in fear of him, until I finally disengaged myself by way of divorce."

After the war, Ursula began to find work as a model, theatre



actor and writer. One of her photos caught the attention of the Hollywood studios and brought a personal offer from Howard Hughes of a contract at RKO. In 1952, Modern Screen Magazine named her and Marilyn Monroe as the most promising new stars of the year. Over the course of her career, she was typically cast as exotic beauties in adventure yarns, finding her best opportunities opposite Robert Stack in The Iron Glove (1954) and Robert Mitchum in Bandido! (1956).

Ursula started dating Taylor in 1952 and the couple were soon seen on the town, dining together and dancing at the Cocoanut Grove. Ursula later revealed: "What attracted me most to him and made him so easy to be with, was his down-to-earth, unassuming manner and his beautiful, searching blue eyes, which were the open windows to his incredible sex appeal."

When Taylor was obliged to leave Los Angeles for location filming in London or Africa, he would write to her every day. When they married, Ursula was swept into a dream world. The couple eventually made their home on a 100-acre ranch in Mandeville Canyon, California. Their closest friends were Nancy and Ronald Reagan, and a wider social circle included David Niven and his wife Hjördis, Stewart Granger and Jean Simmons. Taylor's old pal Clark Gable taught Ursula to shoot so she could join them when they went hunting. Taylor was the most unpretentious of actors and loved a quiet family life. Every Christmas, he would dress up as Santa for their children, Terry and Tessa.

DUTIFUL WIFE

Taylor's marriage to Barbara Stanwyck had struggled to become a union of equals. Despite Taylor's popularity in a string of hits from Camille (1936) to Waterloo Bridge (1940), Stanwyck was the bigger star and was said to have called the shots. Taylor became notorious for affairs with his leading ladies, including Lana Turner and Ava Gardner. Ursula eventually made the decision to quit her film career and devote herself completely to life as a dutiful wife, mother and homemaker. Taylor nicknamed her 'Mutti' (mother in German). Ursula always brought the family when she went to visit Taylor on location. She even took a small role as reporter Lisa Bonay in Taylor's television series The Detectives (1959-62) just to stay close to him.

Taylor had always been a three-pack-a-day smoker and in 1967 his health began to fail before he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He died in June 1969, just a fortnight after Ursula's son Michael was found dead from a drug overdose.

In time, Ursula found happiness again with film distributor Marshall Schacker. They married in 1974 and were together until his death from cancer in 1986. Ursula was diagnosed with a brain tumour in 1979 but survived the surgery for its removal. In her final years, she developed into an accomplished artist and was a dedicated volunteer at a children's hospital in Los Angeles. She died in 2010, aged 86.

Relax
Rewind
Replay...

Reel obsession

Gary Alston of Epsom gives an insight into the seven fantastic films that top his all-time favourites list

I truly love the musical romantic comedy **ROMANCE ON THE HIGH SEAS (1948) (1)**, featuring Doris Day's stunning film debut. Doris plays Georgia Garrett and when she sings It's Magic to Peter Virgil (Jack Carson) we can't help but fall in love with her! The million-selling song became so popular, that in Britain the film was renamed It's Magic.

Who doesn't love a rip-roaring Boys Own adventure yarn? **NORTH WEST FRONTIER (1959) (2)** is set in 1905 on the north west frontier of British-India, where Captain Scott (Kenneth More) has been tasked with rescuing five-year-old Prince Kishan (Govind Raja Ross) and his American governess Catherine Wyatt (Lauren Bacall) from a violent rebellion.

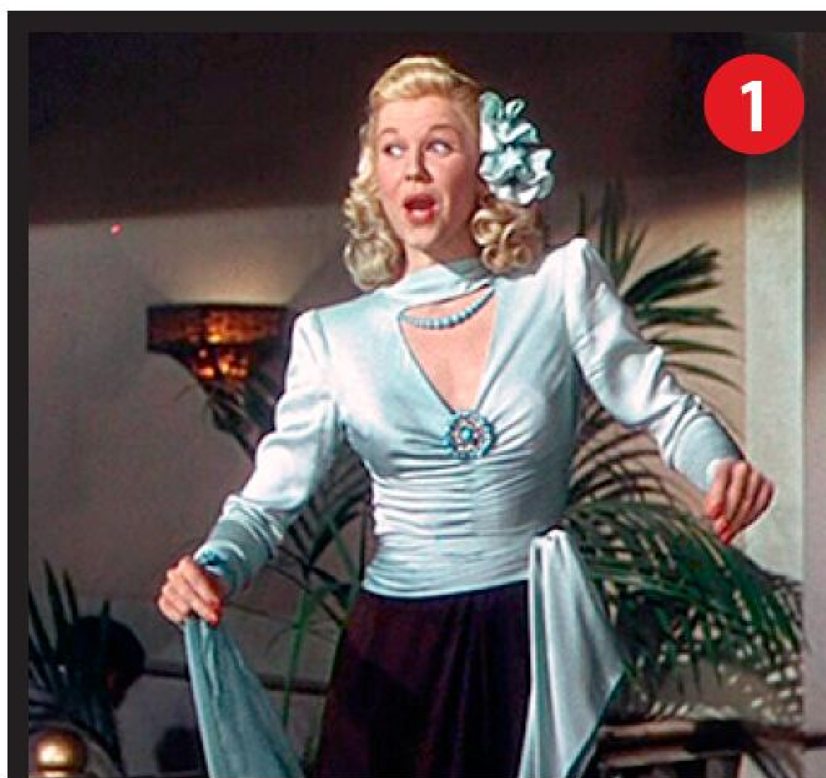
From the first time I watched **THE INNOCENTS (1961) (3)** I was captivated. Two children living in seclusion on their wealthy uncle's country estate have been possessed by the ghosts of the former valet (Peter Wyngarde) and governess (Clytie Jessop). Deborah Kerr headlines, but the real stars are the children: Flora (Pamela Franklin) and Miles (Martin Stephens), who are extraordinary in their roles.

Of the series, **CARRY ON TEACHER (1959) (4)** is my favourite. Every time I watch it, I laugh until I cry. The rambunctious cast, headed by Ted Ray as long-suffering head teacher Mr Wakefield, have established and perfected the Carry On formula.

I've always believed the multi-Oscar-nominated **HUD (1963) (5)** to be one of Paul Newman's finest films. A Western with a difference, concentrating on dialogue and characters, centring on the conflict between morally dubious rancher Hud (Paul Newman) and his father Horner (Melvyn Douglas) during a foot-and-mouth outbreak.

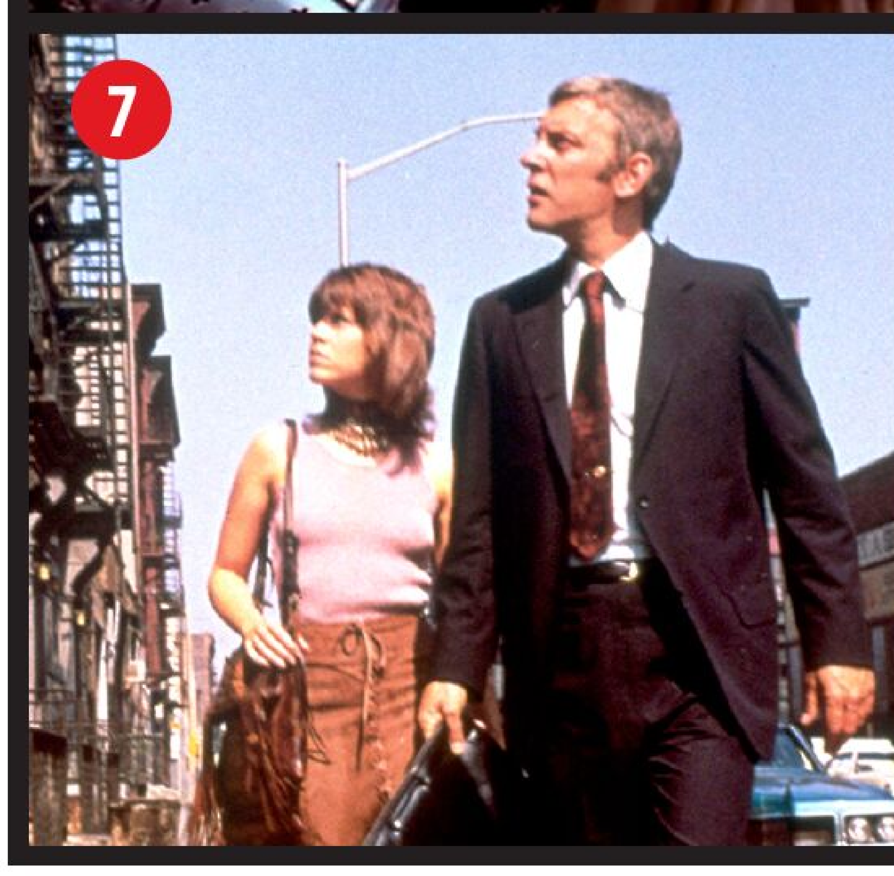
When my late Dad was young, he was the spitting image of Danny Kaye, so it's appropriate that he introduced me to **THE COURT JESTER (1955) (6)** as a young boy. The story, set in Medieval times, has Danny playing three roles: Hubert Hawkins, The Black Fox and the flamboyant Giacomo. There is brilliant support here from Glynis Johns, Angela Lansbury, and Cecil Parker, with Basil Rathbone as the dastardly Lord Ravenhurst and a scene-stealing Mildred Natwick as Griselda, whose tongue-twisting riddles will have you in fits!

KLUTE (1971) (7) is a real edge-of-your-seat psychological thriller. Jane Fonda stars as Bree Daniels, a high-class call girl who helps detective John Klute (Donald Sutherland) solve a missing persons case. It's a very dark story, directed by Alan J. Pakula. Even the soundtrack is so full of menace it makes the hairs on my neck stand on end!





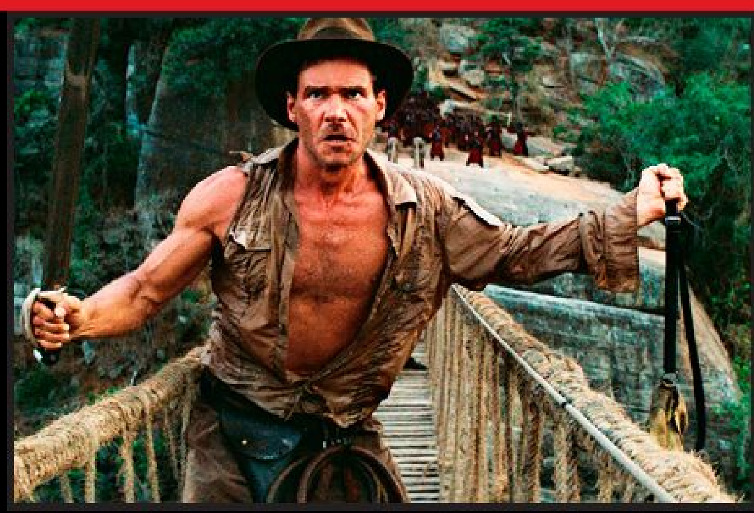




Tell us your magnificent seven films and why they mean so much to you. Contact details on page 3

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM (1984) IS 40 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR. HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE ACTION ADVENTURE?

True or False?

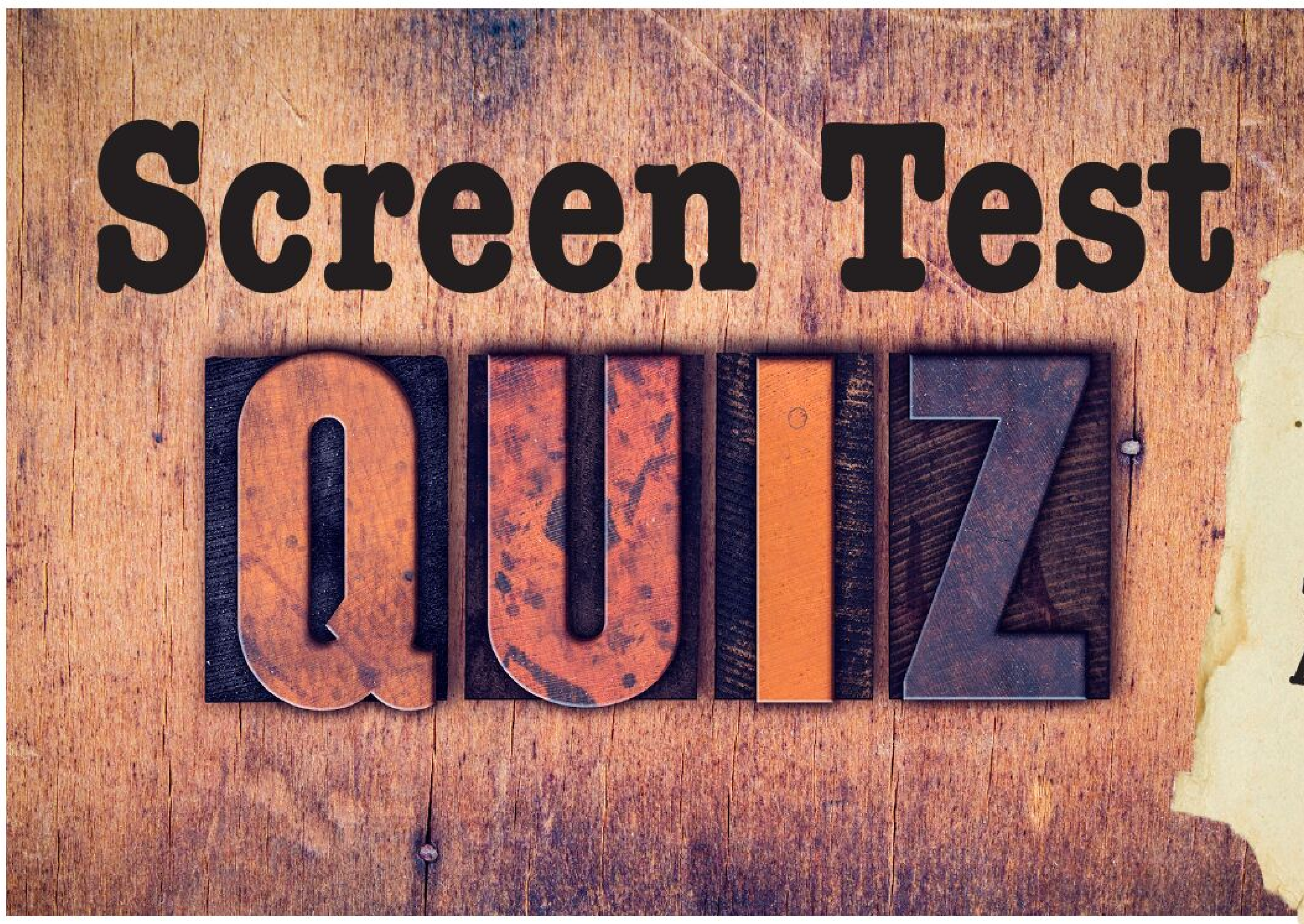






1 Indie's love interest, Willie Scott, was played by Karen Allen.
2 Willie is an American nightclub singer working in a Shanghai club called Obi Wan.
3 The story has Indie tasked with reclaiming a sacred rock that was stolen by the ancient Thuggee cult.
4 The archaeologist is accompanied by a trusty 12-year-old sidekick Short Round.
5 Willie is forced to drink a potion to prepare her to be a human sacrifice.
6 The trio escape the temple in a roller-coaster-style mine cart chase scene.

Are you ready for some fiendish quizzing? It may be just for fun but pride is at stake…



Who am I?

How many clues do you need to identify this star?

1 I was born on February 9, 1891 in Surrey, the son of a successful silk merchant.

2 I fought in France during the First World War and was wounded at the battle of Messines.

3 My film debut was opposite Lillian Gish in The White Sister (1923).

4 My cultured speaking voice came into its own with the arrival of sound in films such as The Prisoner of Zenda (1937).

5 A career highlight was an Oscar for my portrayal of a tormented actor in A Double Life (1947).

IN A SPIN

Can you unravel these anagrams to reveal the titles of five Shirley MacLaine films?

NAH TRAMPETTE
DEMON AT FERMENTERS
GLOAT MEALINESS
TECHY WAITERS
ACID OR ULEMA

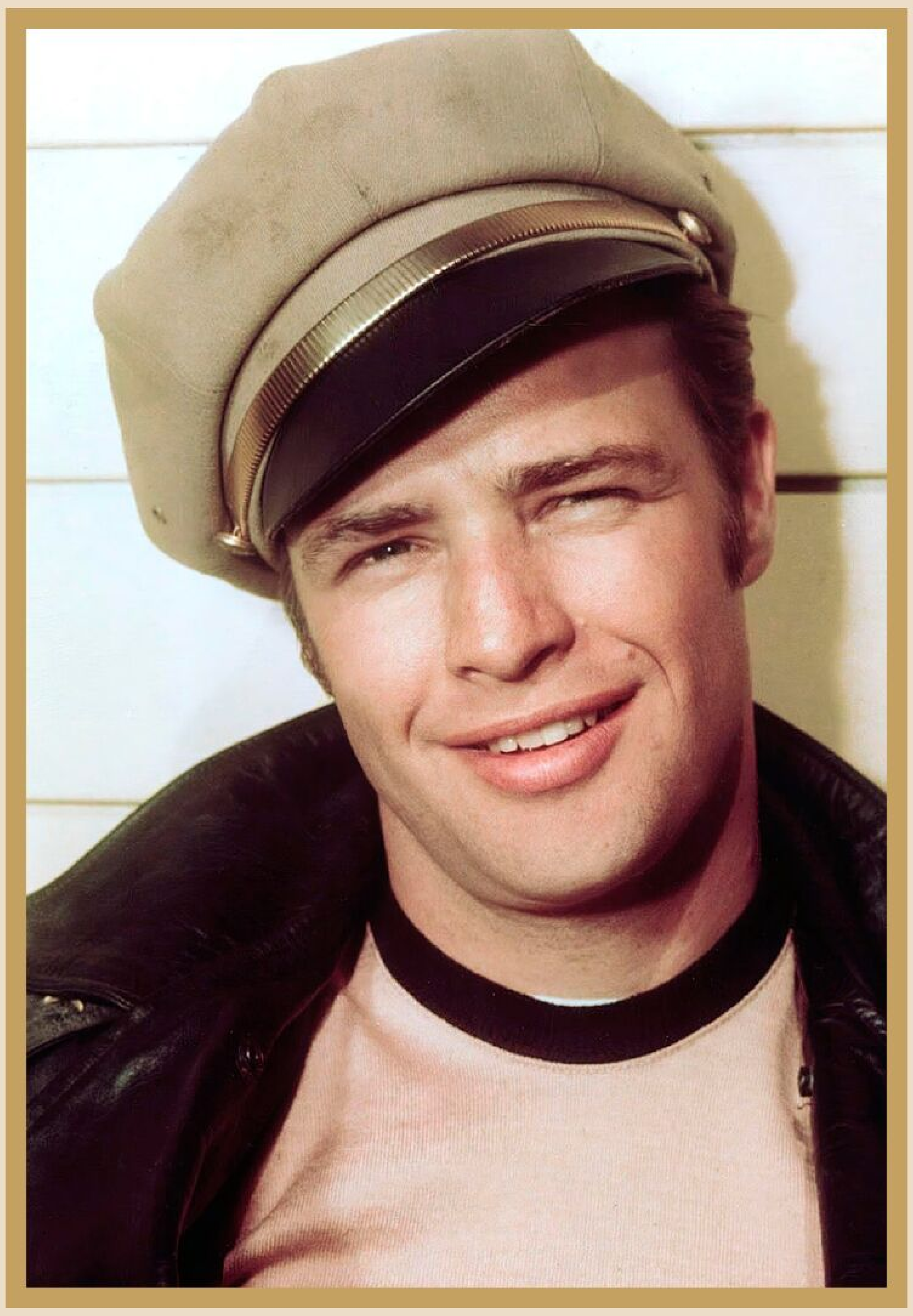
PIXELLATE

Can you identify which of the 'brides' is behind the door in this scene from Seven Brides For Seven Brothers (1954)?



ANSWERS: True or False? 1 False, it was Kate Capshaw. Karen Allen was the love interest in the first, third and fourth films. 2 True 3 True. 4 True. 5 False, it's Indie that drinks the potion. 6 True.
Who am I? Ronald Colman.
In A Spin: The Apartment, Terms of Endearment, Steel Magnolias, Sweet Charity, Irma la Douce
Pixellate: Jane Powell.

NEXT ISSUE



My friend Marlon

George Englund knew Brando better than anyone, being close friends for almost 50 years. In an exclusive extract from his book, he reveals the real man behind the myth

All-action star Harrison Ford

We reveal new behind-the-scenes secrets of the Indiana Jones films

Famous foursome

Discover the real-life friendship between Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn

Remembering Top TV shows

Celebrating Stingray, Rising Damp, The Goodies and The Partridge Family

On sale July 4

Cut-out-and-keep posters to collect…

FREE CLASSIC POSTER

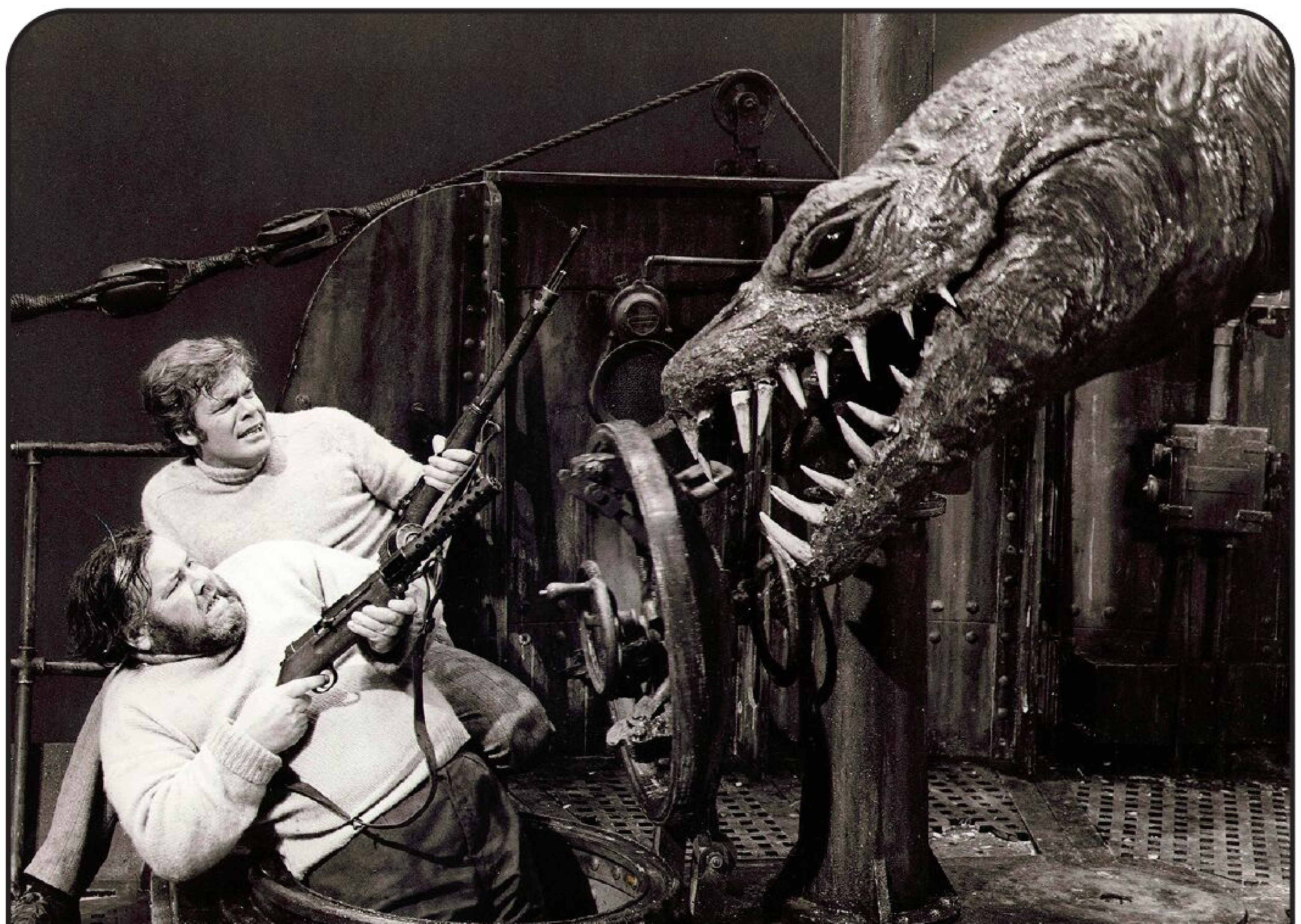
Prehistoric creatures, volcanic eruptions and a First World War German U-boat… Amicus Productions' 1974 version of Edgar Rice Burroughs' The Land That Time Forgot has all the makings of a rip-roaring adventure. Bowen Tyler (Doug McClure) and Lisa Clayton (Susan Penhaligon) are among a small group of survivors from a British supply ship who are taken in by a German U-boat crew after the vessel has sunk their ship.

The British manage to seize the submarine, which is running out of fuel, but when a German crew member sabotages the compass they find themselves heading towards a fantastical island. Trapped in the uncharted subcontinent, where dinosaurs co-exist with primitive man, everyone must put their differences aside and work together in the fight to survive and escape the perils of the lost island.

With a script co-written by Michael Moorcock, one of Britain's leading British science fiction and fantasy writers, director Kevin Connor took on what Amicus, who built their reputation with horror anthologies, claimed was their most expensive film to date.

Doug McClure, best known as Trampas in The Virginian (1962-71), was singled out for praise by the director, "In fight scenes he was especially good due to his hours of American TV action films. He knew exactly where the camera was at all times, and threw punches precisely where the effect would work on screen."

DID YOU KNOW? The film was a modest hit at the British box office – the 14th biggest seller of the year.



Special effects technician Roger Dicken decided to create the dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures as puppets rather than using stop-motion animation


FROM THE AUTHOR OF TARZAN
THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT
U-33